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# THE DICKENSIAN

EDITED BY LESLIE C. STAPLES

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR DICKENS LOVERS

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# THE DICKENSIAN

WINTER NUMBER

VOL. XLV. 1st DECEMBER, 1948 No. 289

## WHEN FOUND—

**The Old, Old Wish.** Once again it is our privilege to send Yuletide Greetings to our readers the world over. A privilege indeed it is, our pages being dedicated as they are to him who is so closely and indelibly associated with Christmas. One of the principal purposes of this magazine is to link Dickens lovers together throughout the world and what better time to further cement that link than Christmas, when the message of Charles Dickens had for humanity is never more apparent or appealing. In the strains and stresses both national and international, of this uneasy Peace, that message is needed as much as ever it was, in support of the supreme message of Peace and Goodwill which seem at times so dim. So: "Reflect upon your present blessings—of which every man has many—not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. Fill your glass again, with a merry face and a contented heart. Our life on it, but your Christmas shall be Merry and Your New Year a happy one."

* * * * *

**A Christmas Appeal.** Ever since that first Christmas when Kings and shepherds brought their offerings to the manger, this season of the year has been celebrated by the interchange of gifts. May we ask you to consider for a moment a gift with which you have been blessed this Christmas, every Christmas and, indeed, every day of your life at the hands of Charles Dickens? Imagine what your life would have been without that "glorious host" of friends which have faithfully kept you company all these years, friends solely of his creating, friends without whom your life would have been incomparably the poorer. May we appeal to you at this season to consider making some gift in return, not necessarily from your personal exchequer, although that would of course be very welcome, but a gift of your personal effort to interest the fellow members of your branch to organise something productive in aid of the great monument the Dickens Fellowship has raised to the author, The Dickens House, the Endowment Fund for which, in memory of Walter Dexter, is still far short of its objective. Many branches have, of course, already done so but it is to the others both at home and overseas that this present appeal is addressed. Those other branches doubtless do much for local charities; will they not now consider doing something for Dickens himself. In four years' time the Fellowship will celebrate its Jubilee and it is our aim to raise the Fund to £10,000 by that date. But that cannot be done without the active help of the many branches which have so far not found it possible to assist us. If each Branch were to organise and carry out a series of functions over one or more seasons, our goal would soon be in sight. Will you not bring this matter again to the notice of your committee?

* * * * *

**Dickens in Southwark.** The second Annual Dickens Service at Southwark Cathedral will take place on Sunday, February 13th, at 6-30 p.m. when the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Southwark will preach. The Mayor and Mayoress of Southwark will attend and members of the Dickens Fellowship are cordially invited.

**Mr. Hill's Notes.** On another page of this number appears the final instalment of Mr. T. W. Hill's "Notes to the *Pickwick Papers*," concluding appropriately enough, as they began, in a Christmas Number. We have continued to receive so many congratulatory messages upon these and the previous Notes that we feel that readers would like to know that Mr. Hill has this autumn completed his self-appointed task. Notes to nine of the novels have now appeared in these pages and those to the remainder as well as to the three major collections of shorter pieces now await publication and will continue to appear until completed. The task has kept Mr. Hill fully occupied, and undoubtedly very happy, for about ten years. Its value is beyond question; nothing that has ever appeared in *The Dickensian* can ever eclipse it in usefulness and the erudition and patient research which has gone into it lays the Dickens world under a great debt to the indefatigable compiler. One day, in happier times, these Notes will appear in a single volume, a monument to their author, but until that day readers of this magazine will have the sole benefit of them. It is our pleasant task publicly to tender thanks in this place to Mr. Hill for his great work, as fully and as adequately as we have endeavoured to do in private.

* * * * *

**Conference 1949.** With the coming of Christmas we shall soon be thinking of the promised events of the new year. Prominent among these will be the Dickens Fellowship Annual Conference which is to be held at Broadstairs by invitation of the Branch there, from May 27th to 30th. The municipal authorities are enthusiastically supporting the plans and everything points to a highly successful Conference being enjoyed by the delegates at Dickens's favourite watering-place which retains so much of the charm that won his affection. Programmes will be in the hands of Branch Secretaries early in the New Year. After last year's great success at Southend we look forward confidently to a brilliant gathering.

* * * * *

**Broadstairs Dickens Festival.** This delectable little town on the Kentish cliffs staged yet another of its Dickens Festivals at the end of October. For four days, in perfect summer-like weather, the programme was enjoyed by encouraging numbers, including Dickens Fellowship visitors from branches in various parts of the country. There were pedestrian and motor-coach excursions, a lecture and a ball, but the great attraction was the nightly performance at The Playhouse of a dramatic adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities* by Gladys Waterer. This characteristically skilful version of the novel was admirable played by a large company under the direction of James Leach. The stage management of so elaborate a production on a comparatively small stage was remarkable and reflected the greatest credit on all concerned. To enumerate everyone in the long cast would be impossible and invidious, but mention should be made of Richard Taylor, who achieved a *tour de force* with excellent performances of two exacting parts, Carton and Darnay, a particularly good Lorry in Stewart Dawson, and as fine a Lucie, by Daphne Hogbin, as one could wish to see. These most enjoyable productions appear to have firmly established themselves as annual events. They certainly deserve to be and we look forward to the next with pleasurable anticipation. This, it is hoped, will be *David Copperfield*, in October next.

* * * * *

**Hans Andersen.** At the Danish Exhibition now being held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, a Dickens letter to Hans Andersen, dated 31st August, 1847, has attracted much attention.

**Royal Appreciation.** Those fortunate visitors to The Dickens House who have purchased copies of the water-colour sketches of Dickens's women characters painted by Mrs. Mary Giles of the Nottingham Branch and presented by her for sale in aid of the Endowment Fund, will be interested to learn that another member of that Branch, Mrs. Meyers, sent a number of them to the Princess Margaret as a Birthday gift. The Princess was reported as appreciating them highly and wishing that her admiration of "these beautiful drawings" be conveyed to Mrs. Giles.

* * * * *

**On the Air Again.** The Sunday evening series of serialised novels broadcast by the B.B.C. has again returned to Dickens. This time it is *Great Expectations*, adapted by Mabel Constanduros and Howard Agg, who were responsible for the best of the series so far, *Bleak House*. From what we have heard of the new one it does not eclipse the excellence attained by *Bleak House*, but it is noteworthy for a splendid performance of Miss Havisham by that fine radio actress Gladys Young.

* * * * *

**Dotheboys.** The house at "Bowes, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire," which Dickens described as Dotheboys Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby* was sold by auction for £5,700 at Barnard Castle on October 27th. The old pump and trough which served for the ablutions of Squeers's pupils still stand in the yard and Dickensians lucky enough to find the yard gate open have been able to see them, but permission to do so was rarely accorded. Our polite request to be allowed to see some part of the premises when in the district two years ago was met with a frigid refusal. The new owner, Mr. R. Wearmouth, a local business man, has bought it as a personal residence, and he writes that duly accredited visitors will be more fortunate. The house was bought in 1813 by William Shaw, the schoolmaster original of Squeers, and until now has been continuously occupied by his family connections.

* * * * *

**Buff or Blue.** On September 30th the "45" Supper Club held a Debate on a subject of some interest to readers of *The Dickensian*, "To which Political Party would Dickens belong if he were living to-day?" There was a speaker for each of the Parties, J. H. McNulty, Arthur Kidd, M.A., and C. L. White. The discussion was then continued by members of the audience. A guest of the Society, R. C. D. Shuckburgh, M.C., great grandson of the novelist, suggested that Dickens would belong to no Political Party, but would be Independent. This suggestion was approved by the voting at the end of the discussion, securing nineteen votes to the six, six and nine of the three great Parties.

* * * * *

**Dickens and Gilbert.** A correspondent in *Notes and Queries* pertinently writes to enquire if, when in 1843 Mrs. Gamp said, "Some people may be Rooshians, and others may be Prooshians; they are born so and will please themselves," did she predict the lyric in "H.M.S. Pinafore," which first appeared in 1878:

> For he might have been a Rooshian,
> A French, or Turk, or Prooshian,
> Or perhaps I—tal—i—an!
> But in spite of all temptations,
> To belong to other nations,
> He remains an Englishman!

LESLIE C. STAPLES

# Presidential Address

By Maj.-Gen. IAN HAY BEITH, C.B.E., M.C.

OUR new President, "Ian Hay," received the guests, among whom were many from branches all over the country, at the opening meeting on Friday, October 8th, at the Holborn Restaurant and, introduced by the retiring President, Mr. Henry Chas. Dickens, delivered the following address :

First of all let me thank you most gratefully for the honour you have done me in making me your President. I have only to glance through the list of my predecessors to realise how very great that honour is.

The last time I undertook such a duty as this was just ten years ago, when, as President for the year of the Walter Scott Society of Edinburgh—a body as formidably equipped in their knowledge of Walter Scott and all his works as you are in yours of Charles Dickens and all his—at their annual dinner in November, 1938.

My difficulty on that particular occasion was that which confronts every speaker who is called upon to participate in an annual event—that is, to think of something which has not been said before. My difficulty was increased by the fact that my immediate predecessor in this duty had been no less a pundit than John Buchan ; and when John had covered a field there was very, very little left in the way of gleanings for any one who followed. In consequence, with the courage of desperation, I drew a comparison between Walter Scott and Edgar Wallace—not from the point of view of literary merit but of prodigality of output. Much to my surprise and relief, the audience greeted this effort as something quite new and commendable in the higher criticism.

Now, I find myself in a similar difficulty this evening with regard to Charles Dickens. But let me assure you of one thing : I shall not compare him with Edgar Wallace, though I am quite sure that each of them would thoroughly have appreciated the other's mastery of his craft, and thoroughly enjoyed a conversation with one another.

Now for my own personal experiences as a Dickensian. One of my earliest literary recollections—I must have been about twelve years old at the time—was of getting into serious trouble for being caught reading *Pickwick* on a Sunday. In the strict Scottish atmosphere in which I was brought up, Sunday reading was limited to works of a pious or improving character ; and though I remember arguing with my father—I instanced Mr. Pickwick's generous treatment of Jingle when he met him in the Fleet Prison as an example of true nobility of character—I was promptly put in my place by a reference to the occasion upon which Mr. Pickwick found himself in the pound at Eatanswill, sleeping off an overdose of cold punch in a wheelbarrow, after a day's shooting in company with that erratic sportsman, Mr. Nathaniel Winkle.

I well remember in those early days, young and uncritical as I was, being struck by the fact that there appeared to be two Charles Dickenses—the Dickens who delighted in making you split your sides at one moment, and the Dickens who was determined, in my own case all too successfully, to make your flesh creep at another. I confess I was thoroughly frightened of people like Fagin, and Quilp, and Bill Sikes and Magwitch, for several years, and even after I had grown up and achieved a certain measure of spiritual fortitude, I never cared to renew my acquaintance with them. They were too sinister, too abnormal for me.

Neither, on the other hand, have I ever been particularly attracted

by exaggerated figures of fun like Stiggins. Even Sarah Gamp, whom the late Sir Arthur Pinero, no mean humorist himself, once described to me as the greatest comic character in fiction, never exercised any particular fascination on me : in fact she always struck me as a rather repulsive and slightly sadistic old person. If people are to be truly comic they must be lovable as well. One must feel sorry for them in their troubles, as one used to feel sorry for Dan Leno and Charlie Chaplin. However, these are only my own views, but there they are for what they are worth.

The Dickens characters whom I really love are his wholly normal people, people with human hearts and human failings—Mr. Micawber, both the Wellers, Joe Gargery, Dick Swiveller, Betsey Trotwood ; even that glorious humbug Pecksniff. In other words, Dickens always seems to be at his best when he is least pretentious ; when he is describing, not some scene of sordid tragedy or exaggerated farce, but some quietly enacted domestic episode. Perhaps my greatest favourite is the famous evening at the Kenwigses, at which the little pig-tailed Kenwigses, headed by the talented Morleena, entertained Nicholas Nickleby, Newman Noggs—invited, you remember, because he had been a gentleman once—and the guest of honour, the locally celebrated Mr. Lillivick, whose eminence was derived from the fact that he collected a water-rate. That was Dickens at his simplest and most delightful.

## II

Of course we all know why Dickens so constantly lays his scenes amid sordid surroundings such as a prison, or a slum cellar, or a tumble-down shack on the Thames estuary. Such scenes had been burned into his soul by his own early experiences. We know that at the age of nine, instead of being at school, he was earning six shillings a week towards the support of his improvident parents in Lamert's Blacking Factory at Hungerford Stairs.

The factory itself was a ramshackle building on the very edge of the River at the foot of Craven Street, Strand. Of course there was no Thames Embankment then—nothing but mud, and rats at high water. Charing Cross, incidentally, can boast of having harboured more than one future literary celebrity. If you walk down Villiers Street, and look up at the wall of the house which stands opposite to the archway under Charing Cross main station, you will observe a tablet commemorating the fact that Rudyard Kipling lived there for two years, as a very young man, on his return from India. It was here, not much more than a stonesthrow from the site of little Charles Dickens's blacking factory, that Kipling wrote his first novel, *The Light that Failed.*

But that is by the way. In addition to the misery of those days in the blacking factory, young Dickens had to endure the horrors of loneliness. After his father was imprisoned for debt the boy was sent to live in a small room in Camden Town. Here he lived quite alone, not always with enough to eat, and tramped to and from Hungerford Stairs every day. On Sundays, in company with the rest of his family, he visited his father in Marshalsea Prison, in Southwark. What a weekend !

Of course to a certain extent Dickens's readers have been the gainers from his early experiences. His landlady in Camden Town was that redoubtable disliker of small boys, Mrs. Pipchin. Lant Street in the Borough, whither he subsequently moved to be near the Marshalsea, also housed a couple of medical students, ultimately immortalised as Bob Sawyer and Benjamin Allen.

Incidentally, it is always fascinating to speculate how a particular

character in a book came to be created by its author, and never more fascinating than in the case of Dickens, who portrayed so many hundred distinct, separate, and unforgettable human personalities. Many of these were highly embroidered portraits of actual people, but one of Dickens's greatest and most lovable characters always seems to me to have been created by happy accident—or shall we say by force of circumstances ?

You remember the famous occasion when Mr. Jingle eloped from Dingley Dell with Mr. Wardle's sister. They put up at the White Hart Inn in the Borough. Now, for the purposes of the story, and for the reassurance of his more delicately-minded readers, Dickens had to make it quite clear that the eloping couple that night occupied separate rooms. How did he convey that assurance ? By means of a running commentary from the hotel boots, one of whose many duties it was to clean the guests' shoes ; in which it was made plain, by his announcement of the numbers chalked on their soles, that Mr. Jingle had passed the night in room Number 22 and Miss Wardle in Number 17. And thus, as I say, by a happy, almost providential accident, Sam Weller appeared.

I spoke a moment ago of Rudyard Kipling. Kipling was in more than one way the legitimate successor of Dickens. In the first place both were literary giants, with this difference, that while Dickens confined himself almost entirely to the life of London, Kipling made the whole world his parish. Both were curiously alike, too, in the fondness for what was weird and uncanny. You remember Kipling's *Mark of the Beast*, and *At the End of the Passage*, both, I think, in *Many Inventions*. If Charles Dickens had spent his youth in India he might well have written either of those stories. And there is a Kipling story, *The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot*, about the East End of London and the murder of a good wife by a bad husband, which Dickens might have written almost word for word.

Both again, at the other end of the scale, and when they felt like it, could be riotously funny, though Kipling's humour was always somewhat forced. It dealt very largely with comic revenge, and had a certain brutality about it, as in the case of *The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat*, or the story *The Bonds of Discipline*. about the French spy who enlisted in a British cruiser.

But one quality both men shared to the full—to the limit, one might say. Each was insatiably interested in his fellow creatures, and was prepared at any moment to convert an individual encountered in an inn or a railway train into a character in a book. Moreover, each was possessed of a demon—his *daimon*—which impelled him to write furiously for the whole of his working life. I don't think Dickens ever spoke of his daimon as such : Kipling frequently did.

Both men, finally, had suffered a similar misfortune—an unhappy childhood, which left its mark in either case. Of Dickens's childhood we know. Rudyard Kipling, like all Anglo-Indian children, was sent home from India at a tender age, while his parents remained behind. He was put under the care of a woman in Southsea, who must have been a confirmed sadist. He was a clumsy and awkward child, for he was half-blind, though no one had realised the fact at the time. She bullied him, beat him, and completely broke his childish spirit. He became a habitual liar, he tells us, just to avoid a thrashing. And his experiences in those unhappy days are reflected, as in the case of Dickens, in his own writings, notably in a grim little story called *Punch and Judy*, which appears, I think, in *Soldiers Three*, and in his own autobiography.

You will note that I have dwelt rather fully upon Charles Dickens's

early days, and of set purpose, because it was then that his character was formed and his destiny moulded.

III

We come now to his development into a writer. He had always been an omnivorous reader, chiefly of novels and plays, and this helped him to acquire a vocabulary, and a mastery of words, which combined to bestow upon him the habit of facile writing early in life.

With his usual energy and thoroughness he speedily mastered shorthand—no slight feat when we think of the primitive system then in vogue—and this naturally led him into journalism. At the age of 22 he obtained a permanent post on the *Morning Chronicle*, the great radical rival of *The Times*, as a reporter. He worked not only in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons, a duty which gave him a sound knowledge of Parliamentary procedure as well as an opportunity to study some of the leading men of the day; but he occasionally travelled far afield—say to Birmingham or Bristol—to report some important speech by a Cabinet Minister. There were no means of telecommunication in those days; the reporter had to convey his manuscript to the office by any road he could: and the man who got there first had scored a "scoop" for his paper. Dickens fairly revelled in this sort of competition. He would arrange for a fast chaise to be ready for him the moment the great man's speech was delivered, and travel in it throughout the night, transcribing his manuscript by the light of a candle, to arrive in London at daybreak just as his paper was going to press. It must have been an exciting life, for time meant everything and definite risks must be taken. But his future was not in journalism, and he knew it.

One evening, late in 1833, "trembling with a delicious fear," he tells us, he dropped the manuscript of a short story which he had written into a dark letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street—the office of a periodical called the *Monthly Magazine*, most of whose freelance contributors were so humble-minded that they did not expect to be paid and they were not as a rule disappointed.

A month later he went into a bookshop off the Strand and bought the current number of the magazine in question, that for December, 1833. He opened it, and there was his story. Any author can tell you what he lived through at that moment.

When next we meet him he will be riding upon the full tide of achievement and world fame, which began with the publication, in monthly parts, of the *Pickwick papers* and ended with the unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood* in the year of his death.

IV

Let us consider how he stood at the age of fifty or so. His popularity was enormous; his books were read all over the world; he had more offers of work than he could possibly cope with, though he drove himself furiously all the time; and he could and did command almost any price for a personal appearance, whether as lecturer or reader of his own works. Popular novelists were greatly in request in those days for this particular form of entertainment.

Thackeray was in as great demand as Dickens. My own father, who at that time was a young law student in Edinburgh, heard them both. He once described to me their different methods on the platform. Thackeray, he said, was the soul of dignity and decorum; he read aloud as a man might read to a few selected friends by his own fireside. Dickens, on the other hand, was all exuberance and animation; he made free use of gesture and intonation; in reading his description of the Bardell *versus* Pickwick trial scene, for instance, he impersonated

all the characters himself, from the judge on the bench to old Tony Weller up in the gallery. He obviously enjoyed his own performance, and he played upon his audience at will, moving them from laughter to tears with equal facility. He usually read for about two hours, but if, as usually happened, the audience showed reluctance to let him go, he was always willing to oblige with an encore of half an hour or so. His vitality appeared to be limitless.

The mention of Thackeray brings us to the sad fact that these two great men were never truly friends, and were at one time openly hostile to one another.

Thackeray was a year senior to Charles Dickens, but he did not achieve fame, with *Vanity Fair*, until the age of 37, which gave Dickens a long start in public esteem. Thackeray was elected a member of the Garrick Club some four years earlier than Dickens, and when the hero of the newly-published *Pickwick Papers* appeared upon the scene, it was probable that Thackeray, with his own fame still buried in the future, may have felt a little jealous; or it may be that a man as aloof and cynical as he felt that he had little in common with a man as sociable and gregarious as Dickens, and avoided him in consequence—behaviour which a man as sensitive as Dickens would be quick to notice and resent.

Anyhow, here is what a member of that time had to say about the pair. "I never saw Thackeray and Dickens engaged at the Garrick Club in regular conversation," he observes. "If either of them entered a room where the other, and only one or two more, were its occupants, he seemed to have come in to look for something he had mislaid, and if he did not make an abrupt exit, stayed only to bury himself in a newspaper, or in forty winks." Which *cold war* must have been highly embarrassing for the other members of such a sociable and intimate Club as the Garrick was, and is to-day.

Matters came to a head in 1858, when a violent controversy arose between Thackeray and Edmund Yates, then a young journalist of 27, who sought and obtained Dickens's advice in the matter.

Ultimately Dickens intervened. He had just returned from the country, to find that his *protégé* Yates was proposing to take legal action in the matter of his expulsion from the Garrick Club. Dickens therefore sat down and wrote a letter to Thackeray, proposing a conference between himself and "an appointed friend" of Thackeray's, "with the hope and purpose of some quiet accommodation of this deplorable matter, which will satisfy the feelings of all concerned." He concluded: "If this mediation can take place, I shall be heartily glad to do my best in it, and, God knows, in no hostile spirit towards yourself."

But Thackeray thrust aside this olive branch. He said that since submitting the case to the Club he himself had ceased to have any part in the dispute. "It is for them," he wrote, "to judge if any reconciliation is possible with your friend."

Well, that was that. The whole affair was a storm in a teacup, but the result was the complete estrangement of the two greatest literary figures in England for five years.

It ended at last, in a casual meeting in the hall of the Athenaeum, at the foot of the main staircase; when the two men, after a momentary hesitation, spontaneously shook hands. They were just in time, for Thackeray died two weeks later. Charles Dickens was among those who followed his body to the grave.

I quoted my father just now as one who had seen both Dickens and Thackeray in the flesh. I can quote yet another first-hand authority. This was an old lady of 90, whom I was taken to see nearly 40 years ago in Boston, Massachusetts, when on a visit to my American publishers

there. She was Mrs. Fields, the widow of the original founder of the firm, and she cherished the clearest recollections of "Mr. Dickens" and "Mr. Thackeray," both of whom she had entertained in her house. She was particularly proud of having been the means of introducing Dickens to Longfellow.

This brings us to Dickens's general impact upon America during his visit there. When I toured the United States, lecturing, three-quarters of a century later, I encountered people who were still trying to forgive him for the things he had written about their country.

During that memorable first tour in 1842, Dickens had certainly let himself go in certain directions, and not without justification. He was righteously angry over the wholesale and unscrupulous pirating of European books by American publishers, and constantly urged and emphasised the need for international copyright. He told how Sir Walter Scott had died, working himself to death to raise a sum that a royalty of one penny per copy on each book of his sold in the United States would have realised.

In this campaign he was supported by all the reputable press of America—the *New York Herald*, for instance—but the pirates combined to oppose and discredit him. To this day the question of international copyright remains unsettled, for, owing to the organised resistance of certain vested interests, the United States still stands outside the Berne Convention, under the terms of which a book published anywhere to-day becomes automatically copyrighted all over the world.

Dickens was righteously angry too, and appalled, by the continued prevalence of negro slavery ; and said so, up and down the country. That got him into trouble with the slave owners and slave breeders of the South ; but again enlightened public opinion was largely with him. By the time he paid his second visit to the States in the late Sixties, the Civil War was over and the slave was free.

In that connexion it is interesting to note that as far back as 1848, at a reception in London, Dickens had encountered a truly kindred spirit in the matter of slavery, that astonishing person, Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, had gone round the world like a flame—it was translated into 17 languages—and had started the movement which ended with Lincoln's Proclamation emancipating all slaves in January, 1863, towards the close of the Civil War.

There is no record, however, of Dickens and Mrs. Stowe having discussed slavery on that occasion. Instead, the conversation took a heavily sentimental turn, on the subject of authors' offspring—brain offspring. Dickens asked Mrs. Stowe how she could have had the heart to let Little Eva die—little Eva, whom he had always regarded as the sister of his own children, Little Nell, Little Dorrit, and Tiny Tim ! The authoress confessed that the exigences of her narrative demanded the sacrifice, though it nearly broke her heart. For several days after, she said, she could not put pen to paper. Mr. Stowe, who was standing by, as usual, amended the period to two whole weeks. It must have been an edifying experience for all present.

No, it was not what Dickens had to say about international copyright and negro slavery that upset America ; it was what he wrote, in *Martin Chuzzlewit* particularly, about their social manners and customs, which stung, and rankled. Americans are peculiarly sensitive to criticism of themselves and their institutions, especially from the English. In this they differ from ourselves, who are so accustomed to being denounced as Empire grabbers, oppressors of small nations, and diplomatic hypocrites, by the world in general, that we have long grown impervious either to praise or blame. The Americans, too, are inclined to complain that Europeans patronise them ; they are conscious, as one of them once said, of a certain condescension in

foreigners. Dickens may not have patronised them, but undoubtedly he caricatured some of them, and it was a long, long time before they quite forgave him for such not entirely unrecognisable portraits as Mr. Hannibal Chollop, Mr. Jefferson Brick, and others.

But the popularity of his books in America never ceased. It grew and grew. During his second visit he was entertained, *fêted*, mobbed. He did his best to respond and play up, but this time the effort was too much even for his resilient spirit. Though he did not know it, he was drawing near to the end of his life. He returned home a tired and broken man, and even the stimulation and excitement of adding a vast conservatory to his beloved Gad's Hill could not restore his failing health. He died in 1870, at the age of 58.

## V

Fifty-eight is a comparatively early age at which to die, but perhaps Charles Dickens was not altogether unfortunate in the moment of his death. Sometimes it is best that a great man should depart this life at the very peak of his achievement, before the downward slope begins. Nelson was a case in point, Abraham Lincoln another, Franklin Roosevelt a third.

This consideration applies in particular to the career of the writer, especially the creative writer—the novelist, the dramatist, the poet.

The life of many successful novelists and dramatists follows a well-defined and apparently inevitable course. An able and ambitious young writer, having languished in obscurity, sometimes for years, suddenly makes a hit ; he awakes, as Byron said, one morning to find himself famous. He becomes the favourite of the hour. Offers from publishers and managers pour in upon him. He may prove to be one of the fortunate few who can live up to all this, and maintain a steady and lucrative output for years. Or he may not. You never know. One thing, however, is certain : his own standard of living will soar and soar, for human nature being what it is, social ambition must always awake and rise with the tide of success. If you are entertained and *fêted*, naturally you must entertain and *fête* in return. And thus, when that tide begins to recede—and it nearly always recedes quite suddenly—our author may find himself, with his vogue ended and no sheet anchor to windward, in shoal water indeed.

Writing, or shall we say, creative composition, is not like any other trade. It is not an ordinary business venture which, if properly founded and administered, will ultimately run itself. You cannot buy a partnership in an established firm of authors, or purchase the goodwill of an expiring author. No, an author's career is a one-man business, beginning and ending with the author's own life, or rather, with his own period of productivity, which may be long or short. It may even be limited to one book. He never knows ; nobody ever knows. If his health fails or his supply of ideas peters out, as in the end it always must—and that is every author's nightmare—then his individualistic, one-man business automatically liquidates itself, sometimes without any realisable assets at all.

I expect you have heard of our Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers ; we maintain among other activities a Pension Fund, for authors who have fallen upon evil days. I happen to be a member of this Pension Fund Committee, and you would be surprised if I were to tell you—which I shall not—the names of some once famous best-sellers, and deservedly best-sellers, who to-day are thankful to draw a pittance from that Fund.

And that is why a writer is sometimes to be envied who is permitted to quit the scene before his powers fail and his vogue vanishes. If he lingers on, he risks being forgotten or ignored by a generation which

never knew him in his prime ; and he may also find it difficult, as I have indicated, to make both ends meet financially.

The inability of literary men to manage their own affairs is proverbial. But there are exceptions. Charles Dickens was a good man of business. Never, after the age of 25, did he know poverty, or neglect, or failure. But he was never a rich man, for what he earned he spent freely, and not by any means always on himself. He was no spendthrift, and would probably, if he had reached old age, have lived comfortably enough. Still, I cannot help feeling that, from the point of view of his own reputation and personal happiness, he was perhaps fortunate in the moment of his death. He had given us of his best. He died, one might say, because his life's work was done.

"Great men are meteors. They burn themselves out, to lighten the world." These words were spoken by one who was something of a meteor himself, and certainly burned himself out ; but I am not sure that he lightened the world. His name was Napoleon Bonaparte. His dictum, I feel, could have been applied with far greater truth to the subject of to-night's commemoration. Charles Dickens was a meteor ; he burned himself out ; and he did lighten the world—with a radiance which the passing of time will never extinguish or obscure.

The President's address was received with enthusiasm and Mr. Dickens expressed the pleasure and gratitude of the members to the President.

Later in the evening the meeting was also addressed by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Hilliard, of Sydney, Australia, the Patron of the Sydney Branch, who had been in London, to attend the Lambeth Conference. In conveying the greetings of Sydney Dickensians, the Bishop paid a deeply-moving tribute to England and all it stood for in the world. Its noble part in world history was predicted to be by no means ended and Bishop Hilliard besought Englishmen not to be discouraged by present difficulties and doubts but to advance confidently to the fulfilment of a destiny as great as their past.

The evening concluded with an expression of thanks to Bishop Hilliard for his memorable speech, coupled with the request that he should bear our reciprocal greetings to Sydney Dickensians and with a warmly phrased welcome to our new Hon. Secretary, Mr. John Greaves, on the occasion of the first meeting to be held since he took office.

# Charles Dickens

## A SONNET FOR HIS BIRTHDAY

By The Rt. Rev. W. G. HILLIARD,
Bishop of Sydney.
Patron of the Sydney Branch of the Dickens Fellowship.

Great-hearted lover of the human race,
Friend of the poor, the sad, and the distressed,
Flail of the selfish, champion of the oppressed,
High-souled despiser of the mean and base ;
How tender to the fallen, and how stern
To those who leave them sunken in the mire !
Thy works abound in challenges that burn
Into the heart like some consuming fire.
Thou has created for the sons of men
A company of friends that charm and cheer,
And with the magic of thy pen
Hast strived to healthy laughter all the year.
We praise the Grace that sent thy soul to earth,
And hail again the day that marks thy birth.

# Another Christmas

By J. H. McNULTY

READERS of *The Pickwick Papers* may remember that almost the last words of that admirable book are these, "Every year, he (Mr. Pickwick) repairs to a large family merry-making at Mr. Wardle's." No account of these meetings is given.

It may be that some of these gatherings were not so lively as those of which we have record, for lengthening years and a growing throng of memories may have brought a touch of sadness. Christmas is a time for memories and these, though beautiful, are often sad. The book closes almost immediately after the words just quoted, and "the rest is silence." Let us attempt to break that silence.

One bright, cold, winter day, a few days before Christmas, Mr. Pickwick and several of his friends met at the Golden Cross, and after partaking of a light breakfast, of egg and bacon, cold ham, and game-pie, took the coach for Rochester to spend the festive season with Mr. Wardle at Dingley Dell, some fifteen miles distant from the city. The wind was bitterly cold, and the sun, which had been shining brightly for a couple of hours, disappeared behind a thick bank of clouds. The wind blew strongly from the north-east.

"Blow, blow thou winter wind, Thou are not so unkind as man's ingratitude," said the poetical Snodgrass.

"If man's ingratitude is colder than this wind," said Mr. Pickwick, "it must, indeed, be cold."

"I only quoted the lines," said the poetically-minded one, "to make us think we were warmer than we really are."

"You mean well," said Mr. Pickwick, whose teeth were beginning to chatter with cold, "let us get into the coach at once."

They did so, the door was closed, and pulling their coats around them and wrapping themselves in the rugs so thoughtfully provided by the coach owners, they did their best to get warm.

"Don't talk, keep your mouths closed, and keep whatever heat you have within," cried Pickwick.

The horses hoofs sounded pleasantly on the frozen road, hardened to the texture of stone by the intense frost, for frost is a great road-mender, temporarily anyway. Soon their breath was freezing on the windows and they sucked whatever comfort they could from this.

"It will seal them completely," said Winkle, "and keep out the draught."

Thus they tried to persuade themselves they were warm, in spite of the bitter wind and penetrating cold. If it was like this inside the coach, what was it for those outside? they dared not think of it. They stopped several times on the journey to change horses, and here for the first time the outside passengers scored. They had only to descend from their Alpine summit and exchange the icy air for the genial atmosphere of the inn. The insides hesitated to leave their almost tepid atmosphere and face the cold without, but the attraction of hot drink overcame their hesitation and, hurrying through the space between coach and tavern, they were soon comforting themselves with generous draughts of hot rum, and brandy with boiling water. These put new life into their half-frozen limbs and they renewed their journey in better heart.

At Rochester they were met by Wardle, and fortified with more food and drink, they drove the remaining part of the journey in comparative comfort, as the wind had moderated and given place to snow. The soft falling snow seemed comparatively warm after the biting wind.

The Manor House was well decorated for Christmas. Amid laurel, ivy and fir, the holly berries shone like little bright eyes, setting off the pale pearls of the mistletoe and the vivid green of the laurel. It was a delightful indoor summer scene in contrast to the white world without.

Among the party gathered at Dingley Dell was an old clergyman whom they had met on a former occasion.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "I am delighted to renew our acquaintance; at a former gathering you were kind enough to read us your verses on The Ivy Green. Mr. Snodgrass, who is also a poet, was so impressed by your poem that he has imitated it. My dear fellow," he continued, turning to Snodgrass, "read us your verses on The Holly Green."

Mr. Snodgrass was burning to do this, but deemed it expedient to show some hesitation; after some pressing, however, he gave way and did with seeming reluctance what he was only too anxious to do, and recited the following verses:

## The Holly Green

Oh, a hardy tree is the Holly Green
That standeth up straight in the cold!
The North wind blows so fierce and keen,
But the Holly is brave and bold.
The trees are leafless and look decayed,
He is bright where all is dim:
And the damage and loss the Autumn made
Are less than nothing to him.
Standing the leafless trees between,
He brightens all round the dismal scene.

2

The woods are silent and no birds sing,
But bright and gay is he.
The storm-cloud showers of snow now flings,
It clings to the old oak tree.
His bright leaves throw the snow to the ground,
And the bitter frost he braves,
His burning berries warm all around,
He laughs at the leaves in their graves.
His warm red berries glisten between,
A fire mid the snow is the Holly Green.

3

The flowers of summer are all decayed,
And their leaves have scattered been;
But the mistletoe's pearls are here displayed
And the laurel is brightly green.
Yet the bravest tree in these freezing days,
When the icy wind flies past,
Is the Holly who pierces the winter haze
With his spikes in the bitter blast.
He lightens and brightens all the scene,
We love the glow of the Holly Green.

"I think," said the old clergyman, "you have imitated my verses very successfully, and I must say that on second thoughts the Holly is a more cheerful plant than the Ivy. Ivy, which lives on crumbling walls and ruins is a fitting subject for an old man like me, but your choice of Holly is a wise one. I am very pleased that I am the cause of your poem."

"Some years ago," said Mr. Pickwick, addressing Wardle, "you told us the story of Gabriel Grub, the man who was carried away by Goblins. It was Christmas Eve, too, and a windy, snowy night like this. Have you any other story to tell us to-night? We should all be delighted to hear one, I'm sure."

"Yes," said Wardle, "I think that I have. It's not a very cheerful tale I'm afraid, not much in harmony with Christmas, but it happened on Christmas Eve. Still, if you want it after this warning, here it is:

"In a village not far from here lived a man whom I knew very well. His name was Charles Guff. He was not a bad sort of a fellow in his own way, but he was given to grumbling, a very bad habit, and was always talking of the badness of the times in which we live. You may talk about making mountains out of molehills, and he was certainly a good example of it, for he was always making a mountain of trouble out of a molehill of inconvenience. One Christmas Eve he had a wonderful dream, as full of absurdities and impossibilities as any dream could be. I have heard him relate the story, and I will tell it as far as possible in his own words."

## The Dream

"On Christmas Eve some years ago, I retired to rest after a somewhat disappointing and annoying day when nearly everything had gone wrong. I usually take some time falling to sleep, but on this night, my head no sooner touched the pillow than I fell into a deep slumber, and slept till daylight, a sound sleep but not a dreamless one, for I had a dream of unusual vividness. I dreamed that I was walking along a road leading to a great city. It was, I think, London, the only great city with which I am well acquainted, though I could not recognise any of its well-known features. I was not alone for a gentleman offered to act as my guide, and as I didn't really know where I was, I was very thankful for his help. The first thing that I noticed was the height of the buildings and the absence of horses, as well as the smoothness with which the horseless vehicles were moving. My guide told me that this was the new form of locomotion."

"These carriages," I said, "appear very comfortable, but they are travelling at a very great speed."

"Oh, no," said my guide, "they are moving very slowly, they must do so in the city because of the traffic, but on the country roads they go at fifty or sixty miles an hour, and are capable of even greater speeds."

"Do they have many accidents?" I asked.

"Not many," he replied, "but a certain number."

"Are many persons injured or killed in these accidents," I asked.

"I regret to say," he replied, "that several thousand are killed every year."

I was horrified at this answer, and at once asked, "Whose fault is it?"

"The drivers blame the pedestrians, and the pedestrians the drivers," he said.

"But surely," I continued, "these fearful accidents which kill so many people are largely due to the great speed at which these carriages travel."

" You must never say that," he replied, " the drivers will never admit that, they will attribute the accidents to any cause, rather than speed."

" I should have thought that all decent people would unite to put a stop to such fearful slaughter, even if it meant driving every car off the roads. It is surely the duty of the Government to stop the killing of people even if it killed the industry."

" The number killed," he replied, " is a very small percentage of the number of cars on the roads."

" But is the smallness of the percentage of killed, any comfort to the victims or their relations ? "

" Perhaps not," he said, " this method of travelling, you know, gives pleasure to millions and enables town-dwellers to run down to the sea, or into the country, whenever they have a little leisure. It is a great boon to the jaded city worker."

" Still I cannot understand why this slaughter is allowed," I persisted, for his answers did not satisfy me at all.

" It is progress," he said, " you cannot put back the clock. But look at the sky ! "

I looked up and saw a flight of curious birds flying rapidly overhead. " What are they ? " I cried.

" Men have learnt to fly," he said, " and those are the machines in which they do fly, notice the spread of their wings."

I was astounded and delighted. " This is really splendid," I exclaimed, and as the flyers passed overhead the machines shone like silver in the sunlight. " This is a great invention."

" It is," said the guide, " and the speed at which they fly makes it possible to visit far-distant lands. Journeys that took several days can now be completed in a few hours. The journey to Paris or even to Switzerland can be made in perfect comfort in a very short time. You can leave England at ten in the morning and be in Basle for lunch."

I was delighted at this news. " I am a bad traveller," I said, " but I should dearly love to visit foreign lands, and flying would make this possible, you are very lucky." We passed on through the city streets and I noticed the large number of dilapidated houses, some completely demolished, some with a few broken walls and shattered windows still remaining. I remarked on this, and my guide said it was the result of a war.

" Were we invaded ? " I asked.

" Oh, no," he answered, " the enemy never set foot on our soil, but they dropped bombs from the air. Flying at great heights they flung explosives and fire bombs on the city."

" Did they do the same elsewhere ? " I asked.

" Oh, yes, they damaged a great many towns in England. Some were even more severely blasted than London."

" But this must have killed many civilians."

" It did, the people spent the nights underground in order to escape the attacks, which occurred most frequently at night."

I expressed my horror at this, but my guide, as if to comfort me, said : " The damage you see here is nothing to the damage we did to the cities of our enemies. Some of their cities were laid waste."

I was speechless with horror and the planes, as he called them, which just before seemed so beautiful, now assumed a most sinister aspect.

" Of course, I should tell you, that though flying may cause death in time of war, it is a great boon in peace, and even in war it has great advantages in carrying food to beleaguered garrisons. In any case it has come to stay. you cannot put back the clock."

This appeared to be the usual method of defence, a sort of cuckoo-cry to be repeated whenever needed. Seeing my dejection he suggested some refreshment. I at once agreed, and we entered a tavern.

"What will you have?" he asked.

I felt sick and tired and said, "Brandy."

"We have no brandy," replied the attendant behind the counter.

My guide explained that brandy was no longer a popular drink. Tastes had changed and the scarcity of the spirit added to its excessive price made it sometimes difficult to obtain. He then ordered a double whisky for each of us. This, I understood, was a popular drink, of which there was also a scarcity. I began to dilute mine with water. "Not too much," he warned, "or you will drown it, it is not at all strong."

He was right. The taste was quite pleasant, but it was very weak, indeed, little better than water. I expressed a wish to try the beer, and did so, and though there was more taste in it, its weakness was such that I should think it almost a temperance beverage.

"Do the people like their drink like this?" I asked.

"No, they don't like it, but they have no option, it's this or nothing. There is hardly any drunkenness to-day."

"I can well believe it, this would not intoxicate a child."

"The price, too," he said, "is very high and many can't afford to drink much." I said I would like to try the food and we entered one of the numerous eating-houses in the city; I found the food scarcely better than the drink.

"Indeed you do not know how excellent our food is until you have tasted my dream food and drink."

I noticed also the dress of the people, no one was in rags, it is true, but there was a lack of colour, especially among the men, which I regretted. The right word was drab, and drab was the word which most accurately described the appearance of the whole city.

All this was a great disappointment to me, and my companion, knowing that I had a taste for reading, suggested we should go into a bookshop, of which there were many in the city. We entered one of the better appointed of these, and, looking round, I recognised the names of several well-known authors, though I noticed with regret that many familiar names were missing. The guide told me that many thousands of books had been burnt in the same war in which the buildings had been destroyed.

"When was the war over?" I asked.

"Several years ago," he answered.

"Then why have these books not been reprinted?"

"There is," said he, "a serious shortage of paper."

"But I have seen many large placards and notices during our walk," I said.

"Of course you have," said he, "but advertising is a very important industry, and needs paper, and large quantities of paper are wanted for notices, announcements and other important matters."

"Surely," I cried with some irritation, "the supply of good books is the most urgent need of all and should take precedence over all others."

He smiled and shook his head. Looking round the other shelves I opened some of the new books by modern authors, especially some books of poetry, and to my disgust I found that I could make nothing of them. They were simply incomprehensible to me. I tried to scan the lines but this was impossible. I am sorry to say that I cannot remember the names of any of these authors. Turning again to the novels I noticed several books by the same author. I tried to fix his name in my memory—it has gone. I do, however, remember that his Christian name was the same as my own, Charles.

"I like these books," I said. "Can I buy them?"

"You forget," said my guide, "you are looking at a picture of the future. These books are not yet written."

"I am sorry for that. Will they be written in my lifetime?" I enquired.

"That I cannot tell you," he answered.

We went out again into the street and resumed our tour of the city. At last we came to a place where several roads met. I attempted to cross, lost my nerve, hesitated, and was knocked down. The shock awoke me, and I was delighted to find myself back in a saner and happier world. It had never seemed that before.

"That," said Wardle, "is the story of Charles Guff's dream, as fantastic and impossible as any dream could be. The story of Gabriel Grub is commonsense beside it."

"You may call it a dream," said the old clergyman, "but a nightmare would, I think, be a better description," and in this they all agreed.

"I should add," said Wardle, "that Charles Guff is a much more contented man to-day than he ever was before, and he never, or hardly ever, is heard to grumble at the small troubles and inconveniences of life."

"This is not a cheerful story for Christmas Eve, let us have a song, an echo of one heard years ago in this very room. I call it the Song of the Seasons."

## Song of the Seasons

I love all the seasons, for very good reasons,
The Summer, the Autumn and Spring.
In April and May, when Spring comes this way,
The woodlands with melody ring.
There are smiles mixed with tears, when April appears,
And the tears are dried by the sun.
When May follows after, there is nothing but laughter,
The sweet o' the year's begun.

Then Summer comes in, with a very broad grin,
And turns the night into day.
In the city it's torrid, and stuffy and horrid,
And we long for the salt sea-spray.
Three hot days and thunder, into shelters we blunder
To shield ourselves from the rain.
First it's fine, then it's foul, we shiver and scowl,
And wish we were home again.

Bright Autumn brings wines from the well-laden vines,
With nectarine, apple and peach.
Then drink up the wine, it is bottled sunshine
And a very good health to each.
Like Midas of old, he changes to gold
The leaves of the tall elm trees.
When soft Autumn closes, all nature reposes
And dreams 'neath the gentle breeze.

The moon with delight, looks down on the white
Winter fruit trees whose blossoms are snow.
The diamonds of frost, are like stars that have lost
Their way and have come down below.
But Winter so cold, has a heart of pure gold,
And brings us his warm-hearted friend.
Old Christmas is here, with his words of good cheer
May his long reign have never an end.

"Look at the clock," cried Wardle, it was on the stroke of twelve. "Fill up your glasses and welcome Christmas."

And standing, we welcomed the merry, happy, holy season. "May each Christmas of the future be as happy as those of the past." Then with Christmas wishes all round, the gathering dispersed and all was silent.

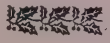
Mr. Pickwick mounted the stairs to his room, but before he went to rest he lifted the blind and looked out at the snow-clad landscape now turning to silver under the light of the moon, and the words of a poem he had read and remembered came into his mind :

Calm is the air, and all the winds at rest.
Sleep in the gaunt black trees, the night is still.
A star appears above the distant hill,
The sunset fades within the dark'ning West.

On such a night two thousand years ago
The Angels brought their message from the skies,
Full of fair Hope and tender charities
To all the waiting, list'ning earth below.

Then Hope appeared displacing grim despair,
Then light was seen where all was dark before.
Sweet music pierced night's silence to the core,
And Spring made gentle Winter's biting air.

"Glory to God and peace to men," the song
Filled all the sky, resounding through and through.
So great the power of the angelic throng,
The echoes still ring out, and sweet and true
Return each year to lighten human wrong.
The old, eternal carol ever new.



# DICKENS'S CHILD CORRESPONDENTS

Dickens's delightful letter to Master Hastings Hughes (December, 1838) describing the punishment of the Squeers household is well known and there are several other examples. One hitherto unpublished and now in the possession of the editor, is reproduced here. The original is accompanied by a note in Mrs. Dickens's hand, acknowledging the first enquiry and explaining that her husband did not answer anonymous letters but that he would be pleased to reply if furnished with the writer's name.

Mr. Dickens sends his compliments to Mr. William Lucy, and begs to inform him, in reply to his letter, that Bailey Junior was liberally rewarded by the Miss Peckniffs, and broke the bandboxes and damaged the luggage, in the greatness of his energy.

Devonshire Terrace,
Thirteenth June 1843.

# SERJEANT BUZFUZ

By W. J. CARLTON

THERE are few of Dickens's characters of whom the originals can be identified with any approach to certainty. One of those about whom there appears to be little doubt is Serjeant Buzfuz, the irascible counsel for Mrs. Bardell in *Bardell v. Pickwick*.

Sir William Holdsworth, K.C., wrote in 1928: "The original of Serjeant Buzfuz was Mr. Serjeant Bompas." Before this Mr. Theobald Mathew had written: "It has often been stated that Mr. Justice Stareleigh and Mr. Serjeant Bompas were portraits of contemporary lawyers, to wit, Gaselee J. of the Common Pleas and Mr. Serjeant Bompas. Of Bompas there is no written record, save that he was Charles Christopher Bompas, and that he received the coif in 1827 and a patent of precedence seven years later. He does not seem to have been regarded as remarkable in any way, and books of recollections are silent as to his oratorical style and his personal appearance. Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz had 'a fat body and a red face,' but there is no reason to believe that Bompas was similarly blessed."

Mr. Matthew was unmindful of the letter from John Bompas, Serjeant Bompas's youngest son, printed in Fitzgerald's *History of Pickwick*, 1891. But the most detailed description of Serjeant Bompas, unaccountably overlooked by all Dickens commentators, is that given by Dickens's gallery colleague, James Grant, in *The Bench and the Bar*, published in two volumes in 1837. Grant's outspoken language is the more remarkable as Bompas was still living when his book was published, in the same year as *Pickwick*, under a thin veil of anonymity.

"Mr. Serjeant Bompas is well known in his professional capacity. For a considerable time he had a very large business, though chiefly of a nature to prove less lucrative than the more limited practice of his brethren. Of late, the business of Mr. Serjeant Bompas has declined, though still large enough to bring him in a fair yearly revenue. He originally practised at Bristol, where he had a very extensive business, but not deeming that place sufficiently large to afford full scope to his professional talents and enterprise, he came up to London and entered the Court of Common Pleas. Mr. Serjeant Wilde has been of great service to him in bringing him forward at Westminster Hall. In fact, he is spoken of by his contemporary counsel, as that learned gentleman's fag. I believe there is no question, that many of the briefs he has 'bagged,' if I may use a sporting term, have been procured through Mr. Serjeant Wilde's instrumentality; the latter recommending him in cases which he could not undertake himself. His practice principally consists in assault and other minor *Nisi Prius* cases. As a lawyer, Mr. Serjeant Bompas never possessed any great reputation. Neither is he considered highly educated. There is a coarseness, in most cases, about his manner of conducting a case, which at once leads to the inference that he labours under the disadvantage of an imperfect education. He is, however, a first-rate talker. I am sure no one will understand me to mean by this, that he is an accomplished speaker. I simply mean by the phrase that he is never at a loss for words. He is always ready at a moment's notice to speak, no matter on what professional subject; and then you may warrant him for any length of time he chooses to name. He does not know the meaning of the expression 'to break down'; or if he do, it is only speculatively, not in practice. He often repeats himself; but this is not an accidental thing. He does it designedly, in order that the points in his argument which he deems the most important may be made as clear to the minds of the jury as they are to his own. And impenetrable indeed must be the heads of the jury, if he do not succeed in hammering into them the points to which he attaches the greatest importance. He is a man of great quickness of perception, and often seizes, with much tact, on a circumstance which may arise in the course of the proceedings,

and turns that circumstance to good account for the interests of his client. He is of an unyielding disposition ; he has no notion of giving up a point when he is convinced he is in the right—a circumstance which accounts satisfactorily enough for his being so frequently in collision with the bench. He has a rather pleasant voice, but its effect is often impaired by an undue animation of manner. In person he is tall and stoutly made. His countenance is of a sandy complexion. In the expression of his features there is nothing particularly striking. His age is under fifty."

A silhouette portrait of Serjeant Bompas is reproduced in the "Topical Edition" of *Pickwick*, 1909, vol. ii, p. 78. The editor, C. Van Noorden, states that it was lent by Mr. Allan Bompas, a grandson. According to the same authority, when Bompas died in 1844, and left a family in rather straitened circumstances, the Bar Society settled a competence on them in honour of his memory.

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# THE FIGHTING FROGS

AFTER Dickens died in 1870 an article appeared in *The Graphic*, which published the famous picture by Luke Fildes, "The Empty Chair," giving a description of the novelist's study. On his desk, it said, " were a variety of objects which were always there for his eyes to rest upon in the intervals of actual writing, and any one of which he would have instantly missed, had it been removed. There was a French bronze group which figures in Mr. Fildes's drawing and which was exceedingly humorous and good, representing a duel with swords, fought by a couple of very fat toads, one of them (characterised by that particular buoyancy which belongs to corpulence) in the act of making a prodigious lunge forward, which the other receives in the very middle of his digestive apparatus, and under the influence of which it seems likely he will satisfy the wounded honour of his opponent by promptly expiring."

In *Our Mutual Friend*—Chapter VII, Dickens introduced Mr. Venus's shop, when Silas Wegg goes to visit that remarkable individual. " Mr. Wegg," we read, " selects one dark shop-window with a tallow candle dimly burning in it, surrounded by a muddle of objects vaguely resembling pieces of leather and dry stick, but among which nothing is resolvable into anything distinct, save the candle itself in its old tin candlestick and two preserved frogs fighting a small-sword duel."

In Luke Filde's picture the fighting " toads " are seen at the left-hand end of the desk. In Marcus Stone's illustration to Chapter VII (" Mr. Venus surrounded by the Trophies of his Art "), just above Mr. Venus's head can be seen a rough sketch of the frogs which distinctly resemble in posture the figures in Mr. Fildes's drawing. It will be recalled that Forster states that it was Marcus Stone himself who discovered the original of Mr. Venus's shop in St. Giles, and took Dickens round to see it and it would appear that the novelist introduced the picturesque touch of the fighting frogs into the novel having in mind the figures on his desk, and that Stone used them in making his illustration. Thus we have another proof of the close collaboration between Dickens and his illustrators.

It would be interesting to trace the present whereabouts of the bronze group. Its final destination should be the Dickens House which already possesses the china monkey from Dickens's desk.

F. R. D.

# The Cheerybles and The Cogglesbys

By W. H. GRAHAM

IF one is in search of portraits of Victorian commercial prosperity in the fiction of the period they are not difficult to find. Indeed they are there widely spread in God's plenty. Some of these pictures are more vivid and make a deeper impression on us than others. Some do not always lead to a happy phase of life but end in tragedy. Generally speaking, however, the prosperous business man is used by his creator as a means of assisting the hero or hereoine to attain their appointed destiny. If to business acumen, kindness of heart and generosity are indicated a most attractive canvas is the result. That two so famous novelists as Dickens and Meredith with strong ideas on social welfare should both draw such attractive twin brothers in commerce is an outstanding coincidence.

Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* was published in 1838. Meredith's *Evan Harrington* appeared in 1861. Is it possible the portraits of Tom and Andrew Cogglesby in *Evan Harrington* were inspired by Dickens's famous twin brothers, Ned and Charles Cheeryble, in *Nicholas Nickleby* ? The Cogglesbys were Brewers and the Cheerybles German Merchants. All four were men who had succeeded in their business by sterling merit and industry. They all display individual characteristics. Perhaps the Cogglesbys were of stronger metal inasmuch as we are impressed with their vigour and outlook on life. There is a more refined, more gentle, atmosphere attached to the Cheerybles. They are all open handed and generous in their dealings with those with whom they come in contact. Dickens in the Cheerybles with their more lovable and simple characters exhibits his greater humanitarian sympathies. This is not to deprive Meredith of his share of an unselfish desire for a better world. For the Cogglesbys albeit of a sterner mould and possibly more worldly wise do not lack a display of the milk of human kindness in their dealings with the world.

Meredith has sometimes been accused of being a snob. This is due to his attitude towards his ancestry in trade. In *Evan Harrington* there is displayed a cynical derision of the shopman where values in the social scale are concerned. And Evan is allowed to escape the servitude at the shop counter by a neat turn of events. " His book," says Mr. Sencourt in his " Life of Meredith," referring to *Evan Harrington* " is his reaction to the whole of the social atmosphere of the time, when the middle classes worshipped the nobility the more passionately as they came nearer to it."

It must be noted here that *Evan Harrington* is one of Meredith's more easily read novels. It has little of his admittedly over-strained and more difficult writing so evident in his prose and poetry.

The original respective meetings between Nicholas Nickleby and Edward Cheeryble and Evan Harrington with Tom Cogglesby are worthy of notice. Evan was making a fool of himself at a convivial gathering in a country inn where Cogglesby was staying. Nicholas was out looking for a fresh situation and had been attracted by a notice board at an employment registry when Ned Cheeryble as he passed by caught sight of him. Both young men reveal something of their individual characters in these encounters which considerably influence their future lives. What is more to the point is that in these

introductions we arrive at a better, a fuller knowledge of the beneficent brothers themselves.

" As Nicholas stopped to look in at the window, an old gentleman happened to stop too and Nicholas carrying his eye along the window panes from left to right . . . . caught sight of this old gentleman's figure. . . . He was a sturdy old fellow in a broad-skirted blue coat, made pretty large to fit easily, and with no particular waist ; his bulky legs clothed in drab breeches and high gaiters, and his head protected by a low-crowned broad-brimmed white hat. . . . He wore his coat buttoned ; and his dimpled double chin rested in the folds of a white neckerchief. . . . But what principally attracted the attention of Nicholas was the old gentleman's eye —never was there such a clear, twinkling, honest merry happy eye, as that . . . . such a pleasant smile playing about his mouth, and such a comical expression of mingled slyness, simplicity, kindheartedness and good humour lighting up his jolly old face that Nicholas would have been content to have stood there and looked at him until evening."

Mr. Charles having taken an immediate fancy to Nicholas at once conveyed him to the city to be introduced to brother Edward Cheeryble. " What was the amazement of Nicholas when his conductor advanced and exchanged a warm greeting with another old gentleman, the very type and model of himself—the same face, the same figure, the same coat, waistcoat and neckcloth, the same breeches and gaiters—nay, there was the very same white hat hanging against the wall ! "

Thus are the Cheeryble Brothers, instruments of Nicholas Nickleby's future success and happiness, presented to us in such delightful terms. The Cheerybles were bachelors. The Cogglesbys differed here. Andrew Cogglesby was Evan's brother-in-law and a much married man. This state however did not prevent him keeping his end up with a considerable fund of good humour. Tom Cogglesby apparently had suffered an early unsuccessful love affair which had turned him into an irascible yet good-natured benefactor.

We are introduced to Andrew Cogglesby thus : " The brewer had no will but his Harriet's. His esteem for her combined the constitutional feelings of an insignificantly-built little man for a majestic woman, and those of a worthy soul for the wife of his bosom. Possessing or possessed by her, the good brewer was perfectly happy." Her sisters " had a little looked down on Harriet's alliance with a dumpy man—a brewer ! " Andrew's greeting of Evan clearly indicates the brewer's sterling character, one who stands no ceremonial nonsense. His membership of Parliament is indicated and he evidently takes these duties quite seriously much to his brother Tom's amusement. Meredith styles Tom Cogglesby an eccentric and his advent into the story is presented by means of a description of an old and regular customer of a country inn. " The most constant patron of the establishment—an old gentleman who had dined there for seven and twenty years, four days in the week, off dishes dedicated to the particular days and had grown grey with the landlady, the cook, and the head waiter. . . . Though his name, his residence, his occupation were things only to be speculated on at the *Aurora*, he was very well known there and as men are best to be known—that is to say, by their habits. Some affection

for him also was felt. The landlady looked on him as a part of the house. His precise words, his regular jokes, his pint of Madeira and after pint of Port, his antique bow to the landlady . . . how he talked to himself during the repast and indulged in short chuckles, and the one look of perfect felicity that played over his features when he had taken his first sip of Port."

The meeting between the brothers at the *Aurora* displays their characters more fully. "A slap on the shoulder, and a voice: 'Found you at last, Tom' . . . he beheld Mr. Andrew Cogglesby. 'Drinking Port, Tom?' said Mr. Andrew. 'I'll join you.' You might see they were brothers. They had the same bushy eyebrows, the same healthy colour in their cheeks, the same thick shoulders and brisk way of speaking, and clear, sharp, though kindly eyes; only Tom was cast in larger proportions than Andrew."

The Cheerybles and Cogglesbys, types of Victorian prosperity and personable features of the era have now vanished. They have fallen into the limbo of almost forgotten history. "The condition of England's happiness," says Dr. Trevelyan in his *Social History*, "in the nineteenth century, and the cause of that peculiar belief in 'progress' as a law of History which cheered the Victorian mind, was the fact that we were not engaged in any great War for one hundred years after Waterloo."

We owe those Eminent Victorians Dickens and Meredith a debt of gratitude for presenting to us in these most unrestful days reminders of the admirable business men produced during the great Queen's reign.

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# FOR CHRISTMAS

## *The Pickwick Papers*

A new edition of *Pickwick* is indeed welcome at this season of the year. Following hard upon the New Oxford Edition, the new one, in Macdonald's Illustrated Classics (8s. 6d.), is also to be thoroughly commended. Stoutly and neatly bound, well printed on good paper, it is surprisingly light to handle in spite of its nine hundred pages. I wish I could equally commend the illustrations. Unless something much better than these can be offered, illustration is superfluous. *Oliver Twist* is announced to appear shortly in this series and the publishers have wisely decided to retain the original Cruikshank illustrations.

## *Captain Boldheart*

Here is a book to rejoice the heart of every Dickensian whether he or she has not yet learned to read or whether he (or she) has been reading for a century. It is, of course, Part III of *Holiday Romance*. The jolly pirate story, of which Dickens was so proud, is exquisitely illustrated in full colour by Robert Stewart Sherriffs and there are beautiful pictures on each of the three dozen pages, pictures of the full-blooded pirate life which Dickens described with such gusto. Other stories of Dickens are announced for the same series and as I consider Mr. Sherriffs and his publisher are definitely to be encouraged, I hope you will do so by buying a copy of this first one. If you do, you will certainly long for more, and so will the lucky youngster to whom you send it. (Herbert Jenkins, 8s. 6d.)

As we go to press another volume in this series, *Mrs. Orange*, has appeared. It is equally delightful.

## A NEW *Charles Dickens Birthday Book*

Following in the steps of her Aunt Mamie, Enid Dickens Hawksley has edited a delightful new *Charles Dickens Birthday Book* to which she has also contributed a little preface of anecdotes of her grandfather. Edward Ardizzone has supplied a series of charming illustrations and an attractive cover design. A most acceptable gift book. (Faber & Faber, 16s. 0d.)

L. C. S.

# The Spirit of Christmas

By LEO MASON.

"I WILL honour Christmas in my heart, and will try to keep it all the year," said Scrooge after his conversion. "May that be truly said of us, and all of us." Thus Dickens concludes *A Christmas Carol*. His name has always been linked with Christmas ever since he described the Pickwickian revels at Dingley Dell over a hundred years ago. His romantic descriptions of the old stage coach, the snow-covered countryside, the clear invigorating frosty air, the blazing log fires, the feastings and jollity, the reunions of old friends, all make a direct appeal to us.

*The Pickwick Papers* was a work of pure humour written chiefly with the object of providing entertaining reading, but having, by this means, assembled a very large audience Dickens proceeded to deliver his message in a long series of novels with a purpose. His world-famous story, *A Christmas Carol* (it has been translated into many languages) contains all that is meant when we speak of the Spirit of Dickens. The constant lesson he strove to teach was the message of Christmas—the lesson of faith and hope, unselfishness and love. When the Spirit of Jacob Marley, bowed down under the weight of iron chains and cash-boxes (his sins) appears before his one-time partner, Ebenezer Scrooge, on Christmas Eve, he bitterly laments his wasted life, crying, "My spirit never walked abroad in life, my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys now lie before me. I wear this chain I forged in life, I made it link by link and yard by yard: I girded it on of my own free will and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to *you*? Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself. *Comfort* I have none to give, it comes from other regions Ebenezer Scrooge, and *is conveyed by other ministers to other kinds of men.* Oh! captive, bound and double-ironed, not to know, that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one's life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I. Oh! such was I! Mankind should have been my business, the common welfare, charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence, were all *my* business."

Throughout the whole of his writings Dickens sought to draw men and women of every class into closer sympathy with each other. His appeal was to those qualities common to all human life. It is a call to service. He strove to elevate the soul of the people by ennobling the homely virtues and by vigorously condemning the vices and vain pretensions of men. Men do not care to be preached at; they much prefer to be amused and entertained. Dickens knew the trend of the middle-class mind; he knew that it liked to be jollied along, hence he presented the bitter pill disguised under a liberal coating of sugar. By means of his immortal character creations, inimitable humour, deep pathos and wonderful powers of description allied with a truly Christian outlook on life. Charles Dickens endeavoured to show the way in which men should travel if they are to share to the full in the Heaven-sent tidings of the Angels on Christmas Eve—tidings sent, not indeed to all men but to "Men of Goodwill."

# Notes
## on
# *THE PICKWICK PAPERS*

By T. W. HILL

(*Continued from* Vol. XLIV, *page* 198)

### Chapter XLIV

1. LITTLE INDIA-RUBBER FIRE BUCKETS. An elaborate way of saying goloshes or rubber overshoes.

2. BOSOM FRIENDS, HARE-SKINS. The dressed skin of the hare with the fur next the person was worn as a chest protector; it has of course nothing in common with the *hair*-shirt worn by ascetics in olden times.

3. ONE-AND-NINEPENCE CUT OFF THE JOINT. This was literally true in the days of the "ordinary" dinner at roadside inns, where the joint, hot and cold, bread, cheese, etc., were all displayed on a large sideboard and the guests did their own carving.

4. POST ARTER THE NEXT GEN'L'M'N. Dickens shews his usual care with details; all the journals mentioned were available at the time. The *Morning Post* was established in 1772, the *Times* in 1788, the *Morning Herald* in 1781, the *Morning Chronical* in 1770, and the *Morning Advertiser*, familiarly the *'Tizer* in 1794.

5. GREEN FLY. The fly was the doctor's carriage; the gardener and general factotum probably acted as coachman for the doctor's "round," so the steps were made to be drawn up from inside the fly. In Defoe's novel, Robinson Crusoe says: "The entrance I made to be not by a door, but by a short ladder to go over the top [of the wall outside the cave] which ladder, when I was in, I lifted over after me."

6. CRUMPETS IS WHOLESOME. Dickens knew his Boswell's Life of Johnson and he may quite probably have adapted this anecdote of Sam's from the story related by Topham Beauclerk on April 16th, 1779: "Mr. ——— who loved buttered muffins, but durst not eat them because they disagreed with his stomach, resolved to shoot himself; and then he eat three buttered muffins for breakfast, before shooting himself, knowing that he should not be troubled with indigestion; he had two charged pistols, one was found lying charged upon the table by him, after he had shot himself with the other." De Quincey in "National Temperance Movements" (1845) also tells a similar story of a Lieutenant Colonel who insisted on muffins for breakfast every morning—he always suffered severely afterwards—life without muffins was intolerable—Nature should be given a final chance—muffins on one side of him and a loaded pistol on the other—underwent the usual sufferings—shot himself.

7. FILLIN' AT THE PRICE. A coinage of Dickens that has passed into common speech.

8. RUSH CANDLE. A candle in which the wick, instead of being cotton, is a peeled rush; it never wants snuffing.

9. CONTEMPT. The technical legal term both then and now for disobeying whether deliberatley or inadvertently. the injunction of the Court to pay the costs.

10. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD: DOCTORS: DELEGATES. See Chapter X, note 6.

11. AVAY VITH MELINCHOLLY. An anonymous lyric written to a melody from Mozart's "Magic Flute." In spite of the sentiment, "Away with melancholy" is a lugubrious production. Dickens had a liking for it and often refers to it.

12. HORN COFFEE-HOUSE. This well-known house of refreshment was in Godliman Street with one entrance through a yard from Knightrider Street both within the Doctors' Commons area. It was demolished in 1900 to make room for business premises: the present Horn Tavern that perpetuates the original name covers part of the site of the old yard. A full account of the tavern will be found in *The Dickensian*, 1926, page 101.

13. STUMP BEDSTEAD. Bedsteads without posts or curtains (which were common); rather like a camp-bed.

## Chapter XLV

1. FIRST OF ALL. This paragraph is an excellent specimen of Dickens's individual style and enables moderns to appreciate its attractiveness to his generation. Most novelists of the present time would be content to write something like this : " Sam sat down to read the newspaper till he heard a stentorian voice shouting ' Weller ' every half minute."

2. PLATONIC WINK. G. H. Lewes in his History of Philosophy says : " Platonic-love meant ideal sympathy ; it now means the love of a sentimental young gentleman for a woman he cannot or will not marry." Sam's Platonic wink may be put into which category the reader pleases.

3. REGENCY PARK. Within living memory this was the name by which Regent's Park was known to many Cockneys.

4. NEVER WOS SUCH AN OLD PICTER-CARD. Not of course a picture postcard as this was not introduced till 1872, but one of the " court " cards in a pack of playing cards—probably one of the kings as they are all tolerably stout.

5. SHAY-CART. A chaise-cart ; see Chapter XXVIII, note 2.

6. SAINT SIMON WITHIN, SAINT WALKER WITHOUT. A play on London street nomenclature. Within and without refer to the city boundary ; it also seems to infer that Stiggins was a Simon (an ascetic) perforce within the Fleet, and a Walker (a humbug) outside.

7. NEGUS. A drink concocted by a Colonel Negus, Master of the Buckhounds in the early eighteenth century. It contains port wine, hot water, sugar and spices. (The Royal Buckhounds were abolished in 1901.)

8. 'MERRIKER—PAY ALL HIS EXPENSES. A sly reference to a book by Mrs. Frances Trollope (mother of the more famous Anthony) : " Domestic Manners of the Americans " (1832) which caused something of a stir as the Americans didn't like some of her criticisms. She did " blow 'em up enough " and it did more than " pay her expenses " as she made about £800 out of its publication.

9. POCKET-PIECES. Small change : copper coins.

10. WHISTLING SHOP. Any shop where spirits were sold without a licence. Sam's explanation, though rather cryptic, is correct, the whistle being a warning that a revenue officer is close by.

## Chapter XLVI

1. HACKNEY CABRIOLET. It must have been a tight fit for seven people in a carriage built to hold four, in spite of the ingenuity displayed in the packing.

2. CHILD OF TENDER YEARS. Young : not strong, through immaturity. It is used in this sense in the Church Catechism : " when Infants are baptised when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them [the vows] ? " Byron also uses it in Lara : " Of foreign aspect and of tender age."

3. HAMPSTEAD STAGE. One of the regular services of coaches (cf. Branch coach in Chapter XXXVII). Mrs. Bardell and her friends would probably catch it at the Angel Islington, which was at the end of Goswell Street.

4. SPANIARDS TEA GARDEN. In the first edition it is called " The Spaniard " its original name, but this was corrected in the cheap (1847) and later editions. " A couple of hours " seems a long time for a coach to take to cover less than five miles. The inn dates from the seventeenth century when it was opened by one of the servants from the Spanish Embassy.

5. HACKNEY COACH. First used in 1605, they were chiefly the disused carriages of the nobility licensed for public hire. A hackney is a light draught horse of the hunter type ; many discarded hunters in the nineteenth century found employment in the hansom cabs.

6. REFRESH YOURSELF AFTER YOUR WALK. Mere politeness ; Mr. Jackson had only walked the length of the garden, but any excuse is good for a show of hospitality.

7. COGNOVIT. Latin for " he acknowledges." Dodson and Fogg could have taken action against Mrs. Bardell for their costs, but her " acknowledgement " of the justice of their claim saved the cost and trouble of an action and they were able to proceed summarily.

## Chapter XLVII

1. MONTAGUE PLACE. An appropriate residence for Mr. Perker as the Bloomsbury district, now given over largely to offices, boarding houses and private hotels, was in the early nineteenth century inhabited by the professional and learned classes, a tendency that was fostered by the erection of the British Museum rebuilt in 1845-47 and later by the University of London.

2. IMPROVED GRAND PIANO. Several improvements had lately been introduced by such well-known firms as Broadwood and Collard, and one can depend that Mr. Perker would have the very latest and most perfect.

3. COSTS BOTH OF PLAINTIFF AND DEFENDANT. This reads as if Pickwick was to pay his own costs and those of Mrs. Bardell, including of course the fees of Perker as well as those of Dodson and Fogg, into the hands of Dodson and Fogg, which seems odd. Why should Dodson and Fogg have Perker's fees ? Chapter LIII clears up the point : after Mr. Pickwick paid the " taxed costs " he gave Perker a cheque for his fees.

4. BROUGHT TO MY OFFICE AT NINE O'CLOCK. One of the most curious circumstances in the book. How could Mrs. Bardell, excited and distraught by her arrest and imprisonment, contrive to discover Mr. Perker's address during the night and then despatch a messenger to arrive at nine o'clock before Perker could have seen her at the Fleet (which he said he had done) with a letter containing " a voluntary statement " of Dodson and Fogg's part in the original action ? Who was the " messenger " ? Was it either Mrs. Cluppins or Mrs. Sanders ? Perker would have known them, yet he said it was " another woman." (Happy thought : Had Sam Weller engineered the whole thing after he sent Job off to Perker's the previous night ?)

5. ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS. This was the estimated cost of the original action ; they were " taxed " at £133 6*s.* 4*d.* (Chapter LIII). This takes no account of Dodson's fees and costs in their action on which she was imprisoned.

6. POST COACH. That is post-chaise ; see Chapter V, note 3.

## Chapter XLVIII

1. WORTHY OF A BETTER CAUSE. A common saying that is reflected, as usual, in Shakespeare.

> " Thou may'st be valiant in a better cause,
> But now thou seem'st a coward."
>
> Cymbeline, act iii, sc. 4.

2. PRIVATE FLY. A lightly-built four-wheeled carriage having a collapsible hood or calash over the back seat and drawn by one horse. It received its name as it was supposed to be specially speedy. It is now almost obsolete, but an occasional specimen may be found at railway stations of seaside resorts and inland spas.

3. CAMPHOR-JULEP. In pharmacy a julep is simply a sweetened liquid to which any medicine can be added, making the latter less unpalatable ; in this case camphor to ease the old lady's supposed symptoms.

4. GALWINISM. Sam's pronunciation of Galvinism ; that branch of electrical science in which the current is due to chemical action and not to friction. It arose from the experiments of Aloysius Galvani (1737-1798) on dead frogs. The word is seldom used now as Volta, and later Davy and Faraday greatly developed Galvani's discovery and the Italian's name was superseded by that of Volta whose name was given to the voltaic battery. Modern electricity is mostly obtained from dynamos.

5. WE ARE ALL FRIENDS HERE. A phrase often to be found in Dickens ; it implies free and unrestrained expression of opinion and is said to be derived from the dedication " To all Friends round the Wrekin " of a play by Farquhar " The Recruiting Officer " (1706) in allusion to the supposed clannishness of Salopians.

## Chapter XLIX

1. LARGE DUTCH PIPE. This is the second mention of a large Dutch pipe (see Chapter XIV). The people of Holland do smoke long pipes with wooden stems but these have never been used much in England, so it probably mean only long (churchwarden) clay pipes.

2. FINNAN HADDOCK. The fish is cured in peat smoke. Finnan is derived from the village of Findhorn near Inverness, or perhaps from Findon near Aberdeen; both villages are on the east coast of Scotland, facing the North Sea, the scene of the fisheries.

3. CANONGATE TO LEITH WALK. Edinburgh's "historic mile." It will be noticed that the Bagman's Uncle traversed practically the full extent of the Edinburgh of the middle eighteenth century; along Canongate to the North Bridge, within sight of Carlton Hill, Holyrood and Arthur's Seat to the waste ground. This piece of ground was waste until recent times and was used as a coach yard.

4. NEWPORT MARKET. Situated in Great Newport Street, Leicester Square. It was a meat market with its own slaughterhouses; hence the reference to the clashing of knives and steels. The market was closed and swept away about 1880 when Charing Cross Road was constructed.

## CHAPTER L

1. COACH. The word was applied indiscriminately to any road vehicle (see Chapter XXVIII, note 2) before the word carriage became common. Now it is usually confined to carriages of Royalty and official personages, funeral and railway carriages (which originally were modified road-coaches). Mr. Pickwick's coach here is more correctly called a chaise on its arrival at Berkeley Heath.

2. POSTILLION. An English form of the French word postillon, a post-boy, that is, the driver of a post-chaise (see Chapter V, note 2); the postillion rode the horse on the near or left side.

3. THE BELL, BERKELEY HEATH. Still flourishing, this inn has on its sign "Charles Dickens and Party lunched here 1827" which shews that the landlord had not read his *Pickwick Papers* properly.

4. THE HOP POLE, TEWKESBURY. Mr. Pickwick had had to go through Gloucester (fifteen miles from Berkeley Heath) but it is not mentioned and his next stop was the Hop Pole making a stage of twenty-six miles for the first change of horses. The Hop Pole is now the Royal Hop Pole and it has kept up with modern amenities without however changing its outward appearance.

5. OLD ROYAL HOTEL. Birmingham is forty-two miles from Tewkesbury and the party must have stopped somewhere for a change of horses but it is not mentioned; moreover "Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Ben Allen fell fast asleep for thirty miles" somewhere on the road, and no other towns are mentioned although the coach passed through Worcester, Droitwich and Bromsgrove. What a sound sleep, or what potent liquor. The Old Royal Hotel is in Temple Row and has undergone considerable alteration since Pickwickian days.

6. QUIET SUBSTANTIAL-LOOKING STREET. Wilmot Corfield in 1913 suggested that Easy Row, Birmingham, was the situation of Mr. Winkle Senior's private residence. It has now disappeared.

7. EXTRA SUPERFINE WIRE-WOVE. The best writing paper pulp is, in process of manufacture, passed between light cylinders with wire-woven pattern and a wire gauze sheet: the impression remains all through the remaining processes.

8. GRIMALDI THE CLOWN. Joseph Grimaldi (1779-1837) whose memoir Dickens was at that time editing for Richard Bentley; it was published in 1838.

9. SUN COURT [GEORGE YARD]. Sun Court appears only in the first edition with a note in the Errata: "For Sun Court, Cornhill, *read* George Yard, Lombard Street" (see Chapter, XXXI, note 3). It should be explained that St. Michael's Alley from Cornhill leads directly to George Yard, Lombard Street, and that the George and Vulture is at the union of the two thoroughfares.

## CHAPTER LI

1. ADDITIONAL DUTY. The tax on windows, first imposed in 1695, was never popular especially as it was increased in 1815. It was reduced in 1823 a few years before this story was written. Houses can still be seen with spaces left for windows, but filled with brickwork, in anticipation of the time when it would be abolished, but this did not occur till 1851.

2. STOPPED AT COVENTRY. Eighteen miles out from Birmingham for a change of horses; no inn is mentioned, but the travellers had some brandy, at least Bob Sawyer did.

3. DEAD DONKEY. It is an old Cockney superstition that donkeys live to such a great age that no one ever saw a dead animal. The *Quarterly Review*, October, 1837, was the first critic to point out that Sam is making a reference to Sterne's Sentimental Journey (section Namport). The black silk smalls were Sterne's knee-breeches—clergyman's habitual wear.

4. HUMANE SOCIETY. The Royal Humane Society was founded in 1774 to give aid to the apparently drowned; how appropriate for the condition of Bob Sawyer and Sam Weller.

5. DUNCHURCH. Only eleven miles for a change of horses and a dry postboy.

6. DAVENTRY. Nine miles on the road.

7. TOWCESTER. Another eleven miles, making forty-nine for the day. How different from the eighty-seven-and-a-half of the previous day.

8. SARACEN'S HEAD. The correct name at the time of the story. It was changed in 1831, in compliment to the Lord of the Manor, to the Pomfret Arms, but in 1944 at the desire of Lord Hesketh, the then owner, the inn again became the Saracen's Head Hotel. It is doubtful whether guests at the present day would be permitted to "have a cigar by the kitchen fire" of this comfortable and well-appointed hostelry. (The "kitchen" has been converted into a bar.)

9. LIGHTS IN THE SUN. The old custom was to give each of the principal rooms in an inn a name; it is still kept up in a few of the old-established hotels. In "Tom Jones," one of Dickens's favourite books, the landlady of the inn where Tom Jones was staying ordered "the drawer to lay a napkin in the Sun" for Tom's dinner.

10. I'M A ROMAN. Sam's way of expressing conviction; His father said "I'm a Dutchman" in Chapter XXVII.

11. CARPET-BAG. Now the name of any travelling bag or valise, whether made of leather or other material, but originally the bag was made of carpet and was generally used for carrying clothes.

## CHAPTER LII

1. POT-SHOP. An inn. The distinction between an inn and a public house is that at an inn one can often obtain a lodging. Bob and his friend had apparently decided to retire from business; they did not go back to Mrs. Raddle's in Lant Street after closing the shop at Clifton, but evidently had some wish to be in their old surroundings in the Borough. It is suggested by G. F. Young that the pot-shop, being "sequestered," may possibly have been the Black Bull, in the Mint, not far from Lant Street. The site is now covered by St. George's Buildings.

2. MUSLIN TUCKER. The lace or muslin frill round the top of a woman's dress and covering part of the bosom.

3. HEMPEROR. See Chapter XVIII, note 5.

4. STAGE-COACH. It was probably the Arundel coach which Sam had patronised on a previous occasion. See Chapter XXVII.

5. HAT-BAND. This hideous addition to the trappings of woe was obligatory for the chief mourner.

6. PATENT BRAHMIN. Tony's name for a lock patented in 1784 by Joseph Bramah. Mr. Lowten used a Bramah lock in Chapter LIII.

7. DISPENSARY. See Chapter XXXV, note 9.

8. REDUCED COUNSELS. The word Consols is a contraction of Consolidated Annuities, a part of the National Debt, instituted in 1751 to simplify the national finances. Nine different government annuities at three per cent. were consolidated into one. At the same time some government annuities at a higher rate of interest were combined and the interest reduced to three per cent. These were the Reduced Counsels of Mr. Weller. The two sets of stock remained side by side.

9. LEFT EMMANUEL ANYTHING? In spite of Stiggins's self-indulgence his first thought was for his beloved chapel.

10. FOUR LUMPS OF SUGAR. This was an extra allowance, perhaps for the special funeral occasion, as his own recipe for the perfect beverage was "the liquor called rum; three lumps of sugar to the tumbler." (Chapter XLV.)

## Chapter LIII

1. PREPOSSESSED AGAINST. Prepossession is usually used in a favourable sense as in the phrase "a young woman of prepossessing appearance," that is, attractive; when used, as in the present instance, adversely, it is equivalent to a mild way of expressing prejudice.

2. HALL CLOCK. Gray's Inn Square has, since 1793, consisted on three sides (the north, east and west) of living accommodation and offices. The south side contains the Hall and the Chapel, on the walls of which the clock was fixed, facing inwards to the Square. The chapel was destroyed by enemy action during World War II and has not yet been rebuilt. Until the clock disappeared it continued to regulate the speed of the incoming clerks just as it had done in Mr. Pickwick's day.

3. THROUGH THE POLYGON. This should be "through Clarendon Square," the centre of which was occupied by the Polygon, a ring of good-type houses built about 1790 for higher middle-class professional people. The Dickens family lived there, in Charles's youth, in 1829, and a house was provided for Harold Skimpole in *Bleak House*. The Polygon fell from its high estate, the neighbourhood deteriorated and in 1891 the Polygon was pulled down to make room for blocks of dwellings for artisans displaced by railway extensions.

4. DEMERARA. Perhaps the choice of a home for Jingle affords a clue to Mr. Pickwick's profession before he retired. We know he had an agent in Liverpool; sugar-refining was at that time one of the chief manufactures in Liverpool; sugar came from the West Indies and Demerara. Had Mr. Pickwick been a sugar broker?

5. SCRAPING THE BACK OF THE PEN. The necessary preliminary before cutting the curves on a quill for the nib to be slit. The final process was effected with a specially shaped tool or else with a pen-knife.

6. HEAVY COACH. A coach built with special strength and very substantial wheels to withstand the jolting on the rough country roads; it carried extra loads and was often drawn by six horses.

7. DEDUCTION OF A SMALL SUM. This arrangement for the repayment of Jingle's loan recalls that in *David Copperfield* Betsey Trotwood offered to help Mr. Micawber and that he insisted that it should be a loan at five per cent. interest, and that in the final chapter it is recorded that "he paid off every obligation." In the last chapter of *Pickwick* it states that Mr. Pickwick "never had occasion to regret his bounty to Mr. Jingle." This of course means that the loan was repaid in small sums.

8. JOB'S BROTHER. This should probably read step-brother as Dismal Jemmy's name was Hutley, as narrated in the "Stroller's Tale" in Chapter III.

## Chapter LIV

1. OPEN CARRIAGE. Carriage was loosely applied to any wheeled vehicle used for professional purposes or leisure. Mr. Wardle must have had a fairly large coach-house; in Chapter IV he had a barouche, in Chapter IX he used the gig, and now he has an open carriage.

2. FRETTED AND FUMED. To fret is to eat away ("Like as a moth fretteth a garment") and figuratively to chafe; fume is figuratively to be hot with anger; the association of the two words appears to have obtained currency from Dryden who, in Palaman and Arcita, has: "He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground."

3. OSBORNE'S HOTEL. Osborne was the proprietor of the Adelphi Hotel in John Street Adelphi. The hotel has now gone and the business moved to South Kensington.

4. FOOTBOARD. The board at the back of a private carriage or a coach on which the footmen stand.

## Chapter LV

1. QUEER STREET. The mythical abode of those whose solvency is doubtful or queer. One authority says it may have originated from a practice of tradesmen placing a ? (query) in their books against the names of customers of whose ability to pay there were doubts.

2. WILKINS FLASHER. It is only a thumb-nail sketch, but what a masterly portrait of a typical stock-broker of the period. Would much have to be modified to-day?

3. SYMMETRICAL INEXPRESSIBLES. Symmetrical here means fashionable and well-fitting; elegant. (See also Chapter XVI, note 3.)

4. P.P. Play or pay; that is, let the wager or risk take its course or forfeit the stakes.

5. SOME OF THAT SIXTY-FOUR. Port of 1764 vintage would be a very special treat in 1827 or 1828, the year of the book.

6. WILL OFFICE. Bank of England. A visit to the Bank of England would not now be necessary as the whole process through which Mr. Weller went has been much simplified.

7. SMITH PAYNE AND SMITHS. No. 1 Lombard Street, just opposite the Bank of England. It was natural that Dickens should name this particular bank, Maria, quite apart from the necessities of the story, as the manager was George Beadnell, the father of his own early sweetheart. Smith Payne's as it was familiarly known in the City was later united to the Union Bank, and in 1918 the joint concern was merged in the National Provincial Bank.

## CHAPTER LVI

1. NEVER IN ALL MY BORN DAYS. An emphatic way of saying in the whole of my life since I was born. Richardson uses it in Pamela (1742).

2. REDUCED COUNSELS OR WOT NOT. What not, a term almost equivalent to "etc," that has become so well-worn in recent years, is really very old. It occurs in "The Anatomie of Abuses," by Philip Stubbes (1583): "heathenry, devilry, whoredom, drunkenness, pride and what not."

## CHAPTER LVII

1. A WHOLE WEEK. A short time for Mr. Pickwick to buy a house, prepare it fully for habitation including no doubt some painting and decoration, furnish it and fit it up with every attention to substantial comfort and perhaps "a little elegance."

2. CONVERSABLE SINGLE GENTLEMAN. Serjeant Buzfus's prognostications "eligible single gentlemen pass and repass, but there is no invitation for them to inquire within or without," were not justified. And one might inquire: what had become of Mrs. Rogers (who kept a servant) who had taken the lodgings within three months of Mr. Pickwick's leaving them?

3. SHOOTER'S HILL. The name of Mr. Weller's "excellent public house" is withheld, but it is near enough to Dulwich for Tony to boast very much of his intimacy with Mr. Pickwick.

4. WORTHY MEMBERS OF SOCIETY. Dickens liked the "happy ending." Reference is made to Micawber in note 6 to Chapter LIII; the case of Charlie Bates in *Oliver Twist* is another instance of Dickens's optimism.

* * * * *

EPILOGUE. Before beginning to pen these notes I read carefully and completely through the *Pickwick Papers*. I had already read it more than thirty times in the course of my life, without counting the innumerable dippings-in to favourite parts of it. Each time it is perused adds to my amusement, my interest, and my amazement that a young man of three or four and twenty could produce it.

My love for Pickwick grows as years go on, and I cannot conclude these notes without confessing that, in the final words of the story there still "exists a steady attachment which nothing but death will terminate."

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THE BOOK OF THE YEAR IS
*OUR MUTUAL FRIEND*

For Notes to this book see *The Dickensian*, 1947, pp 85, 142, 206.

# Was Dickens Great?

By F. AUBREY POSTLETHWAITE

THE following fragment of an off-the-record Brains Trust session was recently discovered during a salvage drive. The reader must form his own opinion as to its authenticity.

The question-master opened the proceedings with his usual remarks, less witty if less prolix than usual:

Question-master: To-night's Brains Trust has a rather unusual character, in fact, I may say, several unusual characters. First we have Mr. Samuel Smith, rhetorician and draper, whose career exemplifies well the favourable influence of strict attention to diet, duty and the daily dozen. Then we have Mr. Fagin, who, as we all know, rendered distinguished service in the last war as Director of Salvage. Mr. Fagin's prenomen, by the way, I learn with interest, is Walter Scott. We have further, Mrs. Sparsit, Messrs. Chadband, Pecksniff and John Jasper, none of whom needs further introduction.

Our first question comes from a listener in Chattanooga, that well-known centre of learning and industry. He writes: "At a recent session of the Five Critics a speaker stated: 'I do not like either Dickens or Oliver Twist.' Does the Brains Trust agree? Was Dickens really great?" Mr. Smith?

Mr. S. Smith: Well, first of all I think that the question is, or the questions are, rather a muddle. What is the precursor of effect? Indisputably, cause. Greatness may be regarded as effect, but is our esteem legitimately to be considered as cause? I think not. If therefore the listener in Chattanooga bases his question on this premise, I would say, as I have said before, that, as effect follows cause and cause precedes effect, I apprehend he is wrong. But this still leaves open the general question what do I, as a member of the Brains Trust, think about the greatness of Dickens. I would reply unhesitatingly that he was not great. He had none of the postulates of greatness so admirably defined by Mr. Henry Fielding—who, incidentally, had not the advantage of living to see his views further exemplified in the careers of Napoleon Buonaparte, Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. Moreover, Dickens was not a gentleman. I should say he was rather a snob. Was not his attitude to my little escapade as Horatio Sparkins a little snobbish? Is there anything particularly contemptible in social success, metaphysics or linen-drapery? No; on the whole, I must say that I do not think he was a gentleman, and cannot therefore consider him great.

Question-master: I think Mr. Fagin would like to comment.

Mr. W. S. Fagin: Yes, indeed; and I totally disagree with the first speaker. What! Dickens not a gentleman? Of course he was one. Dickens was a writer, and what could be more gentlemanly than that? Now, if the question had been was he a clever man, was he a man of real ability, I should say decidedly no. He wrote books, popular books, but he could no more help writing them than he could help having his breakfast. Is the great man clever? Of course. The three careers mentioned by Mr. Smith prove it. They came from nothing—as I myself did. I brought some mischief on mankind, and so did they. But what does mankind deserve? How else is it to be kept in order? No, Dickens was a gentleman—unjust to me personally, as gentlemen often are, but a gentleman. Clever, no. He died worth about £70,000; when I die I shall be worth a lot more. That is what I call being clever.

Mr. Pecksniff: Fie, fie, Mr. Fagin—I should say, Mr. W. S. Fagin. Is our aspect to be so mercenary; and are the fruits of erudition to be so lightly left on the sideboard? Let us improve our minds by mutual enquiry and discussion, but above all let us be moral; let us contemplate existence. Are not the metaphysical concepts so well postulated by Mr. Smith a necessary part of existence? It was, I believe, the late M. Arouet—a French writer—who playfully but truly remarked (and I quote): "Quand celui qui parle n'entend rien et celui qui écoute n'entend plus, c'est métaphysique," and is not this great truth deserving of all respect?

Question-master: I think this is rather wandering from the point.

Mr. Pecksniff: I will return to it. Was Dickens great? Every man has a right, an undoubted right, to regulate his own proceedings by his own likings and dislikings, supposing they are not immoral and not irreligious. Was Dickens, then, moral and religious? Surely there can be only one answer. He was, he was! I may feel in my own breast that he did not regard me with exactly that amount of Christian love which should have subsisted between us; I may have felt hurt and grieved at the circumstance; still I should not rush to the conclusion that he was wholly without justification. It is a question of degree. We are all moral and religious, but some more so than others. That Dickens was congenitally unable to read character and peculiarly liable to self-deception is patent to all. But do we think the less of him for that? I trust not. A religious man, a good man, yes—a great man, no!

Question-master: I feel sure that Mr. Chadband has something neatly antithetical to say about this.

Mr. Chadband: O let us be joyful, joyful! Eightpence is not much. Viewed as a chastening by Providence it might easily have been more. (I refer, sir, to a small overcharge by the driver of a semi-public conveyance I have just left in Portland Place.) Was Dickens a religious man, a good man? Let us, my friends, in a spirit of humility, enquire on these matters. For what are religion and goodness? Are they free-thinking and vice; are they irreverence and turpitude? Are they joking and smoking, drinking and junketting? No, my friends, they are none of these. I was privileged, as few may be privileged who are not prepared to put pen to paper and—if I may so put it—to expend postage, to warn Mr. Dickens in his later years of his likely destination. True, I did not know then—nobody, alas! knew *then*—to what extent he had been in his lifetime a Gentile and a Heathen, a dweller in the tents of Tom-all-Alone's and a mover-on upon the surface of the earth; we knew, indeed, that there were brethren among us devoid of parents, devoid of relations, devoid of flocks and herds, of gold, of silver, and of precious stones; but we did not know then, alas! that there had been one human boy among us, for all too brief a period, whose origin had never been illumined, as it has been illumined now, by the ray of rays, the sun of suns, the moon of moons—the light of Terewth. No, my friends, we did not know this; but what we did know and did warn him about was that his capital stock with the Heavenly Host was at a discount. And if you don't believe me, read chapter 36 of *The Uncommercial Traveller*. I am sure we shall come back to this question ere long.

Mr. Fagin: Not I.

Question-master: That settles it. Has Mr. John Jasper any views?

Mr. J. Jasper: I disagree with all the preceding speakers on every conceivable point. A great man, a great author, a religious man, a freethinker, a libertine? No, sir; he was just a great bore. Look at the miserable view he took of opium-smoking, for example—a cleanly habit compared with guzzling various forms of alcohol. Was

Coleridge a worse character than Hazlitt (who probably drank a lot in his earlier years), or De Quincey than Charles Lamb ? No ; just because of a snobbish prejudice against a cleanly stimulant he was bound to work up all that fuss about my dreams and my private affairs. Was it my fault that I was condemned to drag out an unutterably dull existence as a magnified choir boy—I, a live man, quite ready to live a full and man's life ? Very amusing to Dickens, no doubt, but not to me. And look at his naive views of women—Rosa Bud and Miggs, Mrs. Varden and—the very name is distasteful to me—Agnes ! Tormentors of mankind, all ; and what did Dickens know about that, or care ? Miggs he thought was a joke and Agnes he thought was a blessing. Pah ! there is not a woman on earth who does not know better and despise him for it, as I do, most heartily.

Question-master : Mrs. Sparsit ?

Mrs. Sparsit : I have only to say that I think you are all a set of complete Noodles ; and your subject is the biggest Noodle of all.

Question-master : That seems about as far as we can go at present with this question. The general conclusion seems to be complete disagreement by only moderately agreeable people. Our next question . . . .

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# On the Alleged Gloominess of *LITTLE DORRIT*

By J. H. McNULTY

THERE is in Boswell's "Life of Johnson" an account of a conversation between the doctor and an old schoolfellow, a Mr. Edwards. It is an interesting conversation and contains a remark which has become famous, and deserves to be so. Edwards says, "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson. I have tried too in my time to be a philosopher ; but I don't know how, cheerfulness was always breaking in."

If Dickens ever had the same ambition he would have experienced the same difficulty. However serious the subject of the novel, however earnest his desire to right a wrong or remove an injustice, "cheerfulness is always breaking in." Even in *Little Dorrit*, which some consider a gloomy book, perhaps his gloomiest, there is much laughter.

*Little Dorrit* is certainly not the gloomiest of the novels. It is nothing like so gloomy as *Oliver Twist*.

It begins in the horrible prison in Marseilles made more horrible by the presence of Rigaud-Blandois, but even he is not so detestable as Bill Sikes or Fagin.

The house in which that iceberg of a woman, Mrs. Clennam, imprisons herself is detestable, and compared with it the Marshalsea is almost cheerful, but neither of them is so abominable as the workhouse, the thieves' kitchen, or the condemned cell of the earlier novel.

If *Little Dorrit* is not the gloomiest of the novels can it with justice be called gloomy at all ?

My answer is "No."

Chesterton says, "For the first time in a book by Dickens, perhaps, we really do feel that the hero is forty-five." What's wrong with being forty-five, anyhow ? But surely if Clennam were the hero, the book would be called "The Life and Adventures of Arthur Clennam," but it isn't.

There is no reason, of course, why a novel should have a hero, look at "Vanity Fair," "Diana of the Crossways," *The Old Curiosity Shop* and many others.

The only answer to the charge of gloom and despondency is that given by the book itself. There is the evidence—turn to the story then and what do we find ? We find brilliant satire, and brilliance is destructive of gloom, and plenty of wit and humour. The Circumlocution Office, so long as we have no dealings with it and only read about it, is a " thing of beauty and a joy for ever " to every reader. Listen to the defence of this wonderful organisation given in true Parliamentary style.

> " Then would the noble lord, or right honourable gentleman, in whose department it was to defend the Circumlocution Office, put an orange in his pocket, and make a regular field-day of the occasion. Then would he come down to that house with a slap upon the table, and meet the honourable gentleman foot to foot Then would he be there to tell that honourable gentleman that the Circumlocution Office not only was blameless in this matter, but was commendable in this matter, was extollable to the skies in this matter. Then would he be there to tell that honourable gentleman that although the Circumlocution Office was invariably right and wholly right, it never was so right as in this matter. Then would he be there to tell that honourable gentleman that it would have been more to his honour, more to his credit, more to his good taste, more to his good sense, more to half the dictionary of commonplaces, if he had left the Circumlocution Office alone, and never approached this matter."

The manner of the speech is perfect, the matter nothing, it is just " words, words, words." The method of approaching the Office is even better, it is described to Clennam by the engaging young Barnacle.

> " ' You'll memorialise that Department (according to regular forms which you'll find out) for leave to memorialise this Department. If you get it (which you may after a time), that memorial must be entered in that Department, sent to be registered in this Department, sent back to be signed by that Department, sent back to be countersigned by this Department, and then it will begin to be regularly before that Department . . . you had better take a lot of forms away with you. Give him a lot of forms ! ' With which instruction to number two, this sparkling young Barnacle took a fresh handful of papers from numbers one and three, and carried them into the sanctuary, to offer to the presiding Idol of the Circumlocution Office."

No doubt this method of obtaining information was as exasperating and heartbreaking to the enquirer as it is delightful to the reader.

If the prisons in *Little Dorrit* cast a gloom, the households shed a radiance. The Merdle household is one of the best. The millionaire might fittingly be called " Midas Merdle," for like the King of Phrygia, all he touched turned into gold, and though he had not the ears of an ass, he had the stupidity of a donkey.

His chief butler, the Avenging Spirit of the great man's life might have been the brother of the Analytical Chemist of *Our Mutual Friend*, though he is rather more talkative.

Merdle's banquets were famous and at these important functions many of the best people were present, Bishop, Bar, Treasury.

At the Barnacle Dinner, Lord Decimus was present and Dickens, in one of his rare excursions into art, compares him to a cow in a landscape by Cuyp.

At this dinner he meets Bar who has a brilliant and successful conversation with him. Lord Decimus has one joke, " the only joke of his life," and he loved it as an only child. The point of it was the confusion between Eton pears and Parliamentary pairs.

Bar asks after his Lordship's wall fruit.

> " Lord Decimus had not heard anything amiss of his peaches, but rather believed, if his people were correct, he was to have no apples."
> " No apples ? "
> " Bar was lost in astonishment and concern . . . Now, to what, Lord Decimus—for we troublesome lawyers loved to gather information, and could never tell how useful it might prove to us——to what, Lord Decimus,

was this to be attributed? Lord Decimus could not undertake to propound any theory about it. This might have stopped another man; but Bar sticking to him fresh as ever said, 'As to pears now.' Thus giving the noble lord another chance of telling his one solitary joke.

"Long after Bar got made Attorney-General, this was told of him as a master stroke."

In the household of the wealthy Dorrits we meet the perfect snob, Mrs. General, engaged to form the Miss Dorrits' mind and manners.

She is so refined and sensitive that she cannot bear to hear the word salary or even remuneration mentioned.

"I cannot object" said Mrs. General, "though even that is disagreeable to me, to Mr. Dorrit's enquiring, in confidence of my friends here, what amount they have been accustomed at quarterly intervals, to pay to my credit at my bankers."

What a noble nature! But her nobility does not blind her to the main chance. "I think" repeated Mrs. General, "two daughters were mentioned?"

"Two daughters," said Mr. Dorrit again.

"It would therefore," said Mrs. General, "be necessary to add a third more to the payment (whatever its amount may prove to be) which my friends here have been accustomed to make my bankers."

The third household is that of Mr. Casby, that oleaginous humbug oozing with pseudo-benignity. It is not apparently a very cheerful household but for the reader it is the house of mirth, for it contains those two laughter makers Flora and Mr. F's Aunt. Flora speaks in a blizzard of words, through which her meaning is dimly discerned. Her interest in Clennam's welfare is truly touching. At his first visit, after his return from China, she hopes he has not married a "Pagodean Dissenter." What awful sect that might be must be left to Flora's vivid imagination. With her is that fearful gargoyle Mr. F's Aunt, with her stony silence and still more stony speech. Her words are like stones thrown in the face of the person to whom she is speaking. They are usually aimed at the blameless Clennam. During one of Clennam's visits to Mr. Casby's house, Mr. F's Aunt was very lively and Flora thought they had better go. But Mr. F's Aunt proved so lively as to take the suggestion in unexpected dudgeon. She declared that she would not go; adding with several injurious expressions, that if "He" —too evidently Clennam—wanted to get rid of her "let him chuck her out of winder." This would have been the defenestration of Mr. F's Aunt, but it really is the defenestration of gloom, as every scene is in which these two wonderful creatures appear.

The whole of Mr. F's Aunt's conversation would not fill more than half a page, but all of it is memorable.

The question is, can a book be gloomy that contains such brilliant descriptions of government methods as those of the Circumlocution Office, such superb satire as that of the company at the Merdles' banquets, such persons as Mrs. General and Mr. Casby and the preposterous creatures Flora and Mr. F's Aunt? There can be but one answer, and the answer is, No.

There are sad pages in *Little Dorrit*, episodes of tragedy and sorrow, as there are in every novel of Dickens. There are shadows, but it needs light to make shadows visible and here is abundance of light.

# Theatre Royal, Montreal *

By MALCOLM MORLEY

PERHAPS the most exciting happening for Charles Dickens during his first visit to the new world was the participation in theatricals in Montreal. This was at the Theatre Royal on May 25th and May 28th of 1842, when he acted in every play given on both nights. It was an event to which he had been eagerly looking forward while visiting the cities and townships of the United States earlier in the year. In Montreal, as player and producer (then termed stage-manager) Boz was to indulge without let or hindrance in what was at that time the largest centre in Canada. The surroundings of a Theatre Royal was something once dominant in his mind. That was in a past period when he had thoughts of becoming a professional actor and when, according to legend, he made the attempt under the strolling manager, T. D. Davenport, from whom the author is supposed to have modelled his Vincent Crummles.

THEATRE ROYAL,
MONTREAL.

The Theatre Royal was not the first playhouse in Montreal. Like most theatres on the American continent it had but a short life, being in existence for only nineteen years. The house, built at a cost of $30,000, had a plain exterior with two tiers of boxes, pit and gallery. Though not a large theatre, when opened on Monday, November 21st, 1825, with Frederick Reynold's play *The Dramatist*, the establishment boasted a company of seventy-one people. The personnel was decidedly top heavy and it is not surprising to learn that Frederick Brown, the manager, was first on the verge of and then toppled into bankruptcy. The Liverpool Roscius, as he had earlier been called in his native England, left Montreal to become a wanderer, ending his days in North Carolina.

The years saw a succession of managers at the theatre down to the time of Henry Tuthill, a player of Irish parts, who took command in 1842. He was the lessee when Dickens came to strut his hour on its boards ; boards trodden by the tragedians Edmund and Charles Kean, Charles Kemble and Edwin Forrest, and by the comedians John Reeve

* See also *The Dickensian*, 1942, pp. 17 and 85.

and J. B. Buckstone, celebrated players all, stars of the highest repute. Surely Boz, the eager Boz, joyfully retraced the steps of the great ones behind the footlights.

Among those who had appeared on the stage of this very Theatre Royal was Jean Davenport, claimed as the original of the Infant Phenomenon in *Nicholas Nickleby*. She was the daughter of Thomas Donald Davenport, the one-time manager of the Chichester circuit in England, a circuit that included Portsmouth, the birthplace of Boz. Like many another thespian in those days, Davenport had uprooted himself from Britain to seek fame and fortune in a new land. With his wife and his daughter Jean, he travelled the American continent finding not unprofitable engagements. The daughter, a child-wonder playing leading Shakespearean parts, proved a considerable attraction in various cities. All went well until it was noticeable that the phenomenon was developing rapidly and could no longer pass as an infant. On August 5th, 1839, Jean Davenport first appeared at the Theatre Royal in Montreal, being seen as Richard III, the rôle in which she had made her stage debut two years previously in Richmond, Surrey. Naturally, father and mother were in the company supporting her. During the month the phenomenal Jean paraded as Shylock, Sir Peter Teazle, Young Norval in *Douglas*, Tom in *The Dumb Man of Manchester* and, incidentally, leading parts in *Paul Pry in Petticoats* and *The Child of Nature*. Quite a repertoire for an infant said to be twelve years of age but actually fourteen. Two years later, in August, 1841, the theatre produced a version of *Nicholas Nickleby* with William Abbott, a one-time Romeo from Covent Garden, in the title rôle. The Infant Phenomenon of Dickens, or of Davenport, was not in the cast.

Another name connected with the Theatre Royal and having a link with Charles was that of Thomas L. Ternan, a Dublin tragedian who, though bald, played Romeo without a wig. Shakespeare's lover in modern head-dress, as it were. He was to suffer a mental collapse and commit suicide at the age of forty-two. During the season of 1836, Ternan and his wife, formerly Fanny Jarman, were the leading players in Montreal. It was their daughter, Ellen, who was to be associated with the Amateur Theatricals of Dickens at a later date and who was to receive a legacy from him at his death.

From the opening of the playhouse in Montreal, the theatrical seasons were indeterminate and irregular. Sometimes these occupied winter months, sometimes the spring or summer. In the eighteen-forties the seasons became more firmly established, generally taking place in the late spring and summer, the heat notwithstanding, and indeed a Montreal summer can be hot. The company, after a spell in the city, would occasionally visit Quebec and places nearby. But the playhouse was not closed throughout the winter. Far from it. Often the building held a circus or was given over to concerts. Then groups of amateurs would take possession. The social life of Montreal knew many organisations devoted to spare-time play-acting. The English Amateurs, The Gentlemen Canadian Amateurs, The Scotch Amateurs, and the City Amateurs took their turn at the Theatre Royal. But the most persistent and long-lived company of all bore the title of the Garrison Amateurs, its members being composed of officers quartered in the locality. Military interest in the drama had long been uppermost. In fact, the earliest theatrical performances in Montreal were given by the officers stationed there, and that was long before the first theatre was erected in 1804.

The Garrison Amateurs were more often in residence at the Theatre Royal than was any other group of players. Since the early days of its opening they had been acting in the building, though for a time

these soldier amateurs had an establishment of their own, the Military Theatre, where they indulged their bent in dramatics. The pieces produced were of the well-worn kind, plays gone over again and again in the bills of the average English theatre of that time. Something akin to nostalgia could be observed in the dramatic efforts of the English officers.

It was with the Garrison Amateurs that Charles Dickens made arrangements to act. No sooner arrived in Montreal than he began to prepare for the performances, being himself the director of the plays. In early youth Boz had participated in Drawing Room theatricals and, as a younger man, there is the probability that he experienced in small measure the lot of the prentice professional, but here, in the big Canadian city, for two whole evenings he was to be the lord-high-everything in a theatre where world-famous stars had played.

The regular company engaged by Tuthill was to begin the season on May 26th, 1842. The evening before this professional opening, Dickens and the Garrison Amateurs presented a bill of three plays, the theatre on that occasion being designated the Queen's and the performance set down as a private one. In all three pieces Charles appeared. His parts were Alfred Highflyer in Thomas Morton's comedy *A Roland for an Oliver*, Mr. Snobbington in the interlude *Past Two O' Clock in the Morning*, and Gallup in John Poole's farce *Deaf as a Post*. Mrs. Dickens joined the cast of amateur actresses appearing with the officers, and played Amy Templeton in the farce. The novelist proudly apostrophised his wife in the hand-bill sent to Forster.

The following evening, Thursday, May 26th, the house, reverting to the title of Theatre Royal, was opened to the ordinary public, beginning the season proper with Sheridan Knowles' blank-verse play *The Hunchback*. Heading the company were Mr. and Mrs. John Sloman. A Londoner by birth, Sloman's reputation in England and America was gained as a low comedian and comic singer. His wife aspired to tragic honours and as an actress was described as coldly classical. Together the Slomans represented a union of the ridiculous and the sublime and were not greatly successful in Montreal. Important members of the company were William Wheatley, Walter Leman, W. C. Drummond, Mrs. Henry, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. A. W. Penson. Mrs. Sloman's part in *The Hunchback* was Julia. The next night she undertook Belvedere in Otway's tragedy of *Venice Preserved*. Jaffier was played by Drummond and Pierre by Wheatley.

On Saturday, May 28th, the Garrison Amateurs were back in the theatre, but this time the female characters were in the hands of the professional actresses belonging to the company. The performance was not of a private nature. It was public, part and parcel of the regular theatrical season. The first two plays on the bill were the same as before ; the last being changed to the comedy of *High Life Below Stairs* by James Townley, in which Charles appeared in the rôle of Philip.

The four English newspapers published in Montreal at that date, *The Times*, *The Herald*, *The Transcript* and *The Gazette*, all gave notices to one or other of the performances of the Garrison Amateurs. Those in the *Herald* and the still existent *Gazette* have been reprinted in *The Dickensian* (Vol. XXXVIII, p. 72). It may be of interest to reproduce the reviews in the other two papers, both having reference to the earlier showing of the plays.

*The Montreal Times* for May 26th, 1842, is perfunctory :

> " A numerous and fashionable audience specially invited assembled yesterday evening at the Queen's Theatre to witness the performance of private theatricals. The committee under whose auspices this agreeable and attractive amusement was arranged consisted of Mrs. Torrens, Mrs.

Perry, W. C. Ermetinger, Esq., Captain Torrens and the Earl of Mulgrave. The magnet of the evening was Charles Dickens, the far-famed and even truly celebrated author. This gentleman joined the amateurs as one of the performers.

"The play commenced with *A Roland for an Oliver*, after which, an interlude, in one scene, from the French called *Past Two O'Clock in the Morning* and concluded with the farce in one act, *Deaf as a Post*. We need scarcely inform our readers that the performance proceeded with spirit—that the performers were favourably received, and warmly applauded."

*The Montreal Transcript* for May 28th is lengthier and raises an interesting point:

"The exhibition of Private Theatricals at the Queen's Theatre, under the direction of the Committee, Mrs. Torrens, Mrs. Perry, W. C. Ermetinger, Esq., Captain Torrens and the Earl of Mulgrave, came off last Wednesday evening and to those who had the good fortune to be present we need not say it was a very splendid affair. Seldom has the Queen's Theatre witnessed such as array of beauty and fashion, and seldom have plaudits of approbation been more heartily given or better deserved. The acting of some of the amateurs was excellent; and that of some who appeared, as we believe, for the first time, was equally removed both from the restraint and over-action which in such circumstancss are often met with, and perhaps in some degree to be expected. The first play entitled *A Roland for an Oliver* called forth repeated marks of well-deserved applause. The character of Sir Mark Chase by Mr. M.* was admirably sustained, and the final scene when he pronounced himself 'as well as any man in England' was equalled only by that when feeling his pulse he complained of the loss of appetite, etc. We could perceive on the first appearance of Miss G.† as Maria Darlington, a slight tremulousness of voice, which, as the fair actress proceeded, gradually passed away, while we could see that she had enlisted the feelings of the audience, and that this sympathy was attended with the most happy effects. In the farce of *Deaf as a Post* the same lady in the character of the waiting maid, Sally Meggs, was still more happy, and should she ever again appear before her friends she will be greeted with merited applause. Mr. T.‡ acted the deaf captain well. Mrs. Plumply§ was an admirable housewife. Tristam Sappy‖ was far from doing himself justice—we confess we were disappointed in Tristam, he was not himself. Mr. Dickens as Alfred Highflyer showed that if his personification was not equal to his painting of a character, for then it would be inimitable, he still in action as well as in composition closely follows the rule of Horace:

'*Singula quoque locum teneant sorlita decenter.*'

In that part where the expression of his madness bordered on the tragic he was peculiarly happy.

In *Past Two O'Clock in the Morning* his representation of the Stranger on the 'second floor' was done to the life. Mr. D. possesses great power of modulating and disguising his voice, and we believe there were many who hardly suspected who the Stranger was until nearly the close of the piece. He must not only have been 'raither purtikilar but werry partiklar' who would grumble even at *Past Two O'Clock in the Morning* with such company. We are inclined to think that this is not the first time Mr. Dickens has afforded pleasure to his friends in a smaller way; and would he describe 'Second Floor' as he represented him, the character would not be inferior to the best in his admirable writings. Capt. G.¶ as Mr. Snobbington, as usual sustained his part admirably, and the representation of the laughable interlude, which was *the piece* of the evening, could not have been better.

Our remarks have already extended to so great a length that we must omit the other performances, and indeed where all did so well, it is difficult to make a selection.

We are informed that the refreshment rooms provided for the guests

* Mr. M. was the Hon. Mr. Matherson.
† Miss G. was Miss Griffin.
‡ Mr. T. was Captain Torrens.
§ Mrs. Plumply was played by Mrs. Torrens.
‖ Tristam Sappy was played by Doctor Griffin.
¶ Capt G. was Captain Granville.

were in keeping with the other arrangements. We observed that his Excellency the Governor-General and Sir Richard Jackson repeatedly greeted the performers with warm applause."

The before-mentioned point raised has to do with the character played by Dickens in *Past Two O'Clock in the Morning*. The actual rôle in which he appeared was Mr. Snobbington, yet credit is curiously given in the *Transcript* to Capt. G. (Captain Granville). To Boz is assigned the Stranger, the only other part in the interlude. How did this come about ?

In the hand-bill of the occasion (May 25th) the characters are printed but no players' names are placed against them. The novelist wrote in these names on the particular bill he dispatched to his biographer, Forster, definitely assigning Mr. Snobbington to himself, a piece of information that might have been missed by the writer of the notice. Another thing, Snobbington was crowned with what was described as a brilliant wig, which had been specially sent to Dickens from New York by his friend William Mitchell of the Olympic. This certainly helped to disguise the novelist as is attested by the fact that, after seeing the performance, Sir Charles Bagot, who had met Charles in the flesh previously, declared he had no idea the part had been played by him.

The most likely explanation of the mistake in the *Transcript* it would seem is the metamorphosis of the novelist as Snobbington. The journal's reviewer presumably found no names against the characters on the bill and failed to recognise Dickens under the wig.

Yet another item of interest is attached to Mr. Snobbington. The interlude of French origin had been adapted more than once for the London stage. Boz seems to have tinkered with the piece, taking the name of Snobbington from Mrs. Charles Gore's adaptation called, " A Good Night's Rest." In the version by Charles Mathews the character was named Mr. Newpenny.

After the Garrison Amateurs ended at the Theatre Royal, the strictly professional element resumed operations on the following Monday, May 30th, when the classic Mrs. Sloman declaimed in Milman's *Fazio*. The season continued with a round of tragedies and dramas for the leading actress and farces and comedies suited to the art of her husband. In June, J. H. Hackett was a visiting star playing Falstaff, Rip van Winkle and in *A Yankee in England*. Another luminary to shed light in Montreal was Mrs. Seymour, the friend of the novelist, Charles Reade. She competed in dramatic rôles with Mrs. Sloman and went from Mrs. Haller in *The Stranger* to the recital of the woes weighing down a character called *The Captive Maniac*.

In July the popular T. D. Rice came to the theatre. His speciality was negro characters and pieces staged for him included *Deaf and Dumb, Bone Squash Diabolo* (a burlesque of *Fra Diavolo*), and *The Virginian Mummy*. In *Jumbo Junior* he sang and danced the famous song *Jump Jim Crow* as he had done in the first performance of *The Peregrinations of Pickwick*, the Dickens adaptation done at the Adelphi, London, on April 3rd, 1837. The last night of the Montreal season was on July 23rd, the occasion being for the Benefit of Henry Tuthill, when the main attraction of the evening was *The Rivals*. Throughout a season of barely two months, something like fifty plays had been put upon the stage.

The following year John Nickenson took over the managerial reins. He, as was noted in the article " Early Dickens Dramas in America," was the original Pickwick in the United States. Later, Nickenson was to be a prominent manager in Toronto.

During the season of 1844 the English tragedian, William Macready, starred at the theatre, but that year was to prove the end of its dramatic

activities. *The Comedy of Errors*, given on August 8th, was the last performance in the building. It was then demolished and on the site was erected the Bonsecours Market. The first Theatre Royal, Montreal, was no more.

# Uncollected Speeches

## XVII

### The Commercial Travellers' Schools.

Transcribed, by permission, from a speech by Charles Dickens, delivered at the London Tavern on 12th December, 1859, and preserved in the *Parrish Collection*, at the Princeton University Library, U.S.A. We are indebted to Prof. Edgar Johnson of New York, for the transcription.—Editor.

After a humorous allusion to the difficulty he had in selecting a topic for his speech, Dickens said :

I considered whether anything could be done with the word travellers, and I thought whether any fanciful analogy could be drawn between those travellers who diffuse the luxuries and necessities of existence, and those who carry into desert places the waters of life, such as Livingstone ; or those who record their modesty, generosity, and perseverance in eternal ice, like M'Clintock and his bold companions at the North Pole. This put it in my mind that the best of such travellers have been among the gentlest and kindest of men. I then asked myself whether I could make any fanciful parallel between my friend, Dr. Layard, who had brought to light the hidden treasures of a great people, and my friend George Moore, who has brought to light the hidden capabilities of a great trade. Not deriving any comfort from these ingenious speculations, I resolved, like the heroes in the fairy tales, to go out to seek my fortune, and I resorted to a certain friendly giant—a commercial giant—and we sallied out together only yesterday. We travelled on and on, very like the people in the fairy tales, till we came to a great castle of a bright red colour, looking perfectly glorious in the cold sunlight of a winter afternoon. We were received, not by one of those conventional monsters with a great eye in his forehead as large as six, but by a man with an extremely humorous expression of countenance, and under the guidance of this director we inspected the live-stock of the establishment, which suggested to us nothing but an abundance of milk and pork. We then entered the castle, and found it within, a noble structure, with a cheerful lofty hall, large airy corridors, dormitories and bathrooms, and an admirable banqueting hall—not at all a mere matter of form, as I found on perusing the dietary table hanging on the wall. My attention was called to the circumstance that one hundred young male giants and fifty young female giants, were receiving an excellent education in this spacious edifice. I looked over some of the examination papers, and I found them remarkable for a prevailing good sense and adaptation to the solid business and solid virtues of life which I had not seen—no verily—in some colleges and ancient foundations. (Loud cheers.) I looked at these young people—the male creatures—and I saw that they were healthy, cheerful, easy, and rational, under a system of moral restraint *far better than all the physical force that ever crushed a*

*timid nature, and never bent a stubborn one.* (Applause.) I found others of these young people out walking under their own control in the lanes outside the establishment, and coming home in the frosty air with cheery faces that were worthy of the season and of the weather. I spoke to many of them, and I found that they answered truly and fearlessly. I observed that they had an excellent way of looking those in authority full in the face. I did not see the sisterhood, and was very glad not to see them, because they were out for a long walk and had not yet come home. Gentlemen, I am told that these young people of both sexes are instructed, lodged, clothed, and boarded until they are fifteen years of age, when they are sent into the world. Finally, I made two discoveries of considerable importance to me ; firstly, that this was, indeed, a most rare, magical castle, by reason that it cost some £20,000, and belongs to a public body, and is paid for—(Loud applause)—secondly and lastly, I found that I had gone out to seek my fortune not in vain, for in this castle I discovered my speech. Gentlemen, this castle is your own, and I assure you that its solid timbers, bricks, and stones are not more solid than the effects which I have fancifully set before you. This castle is the Commercial Travellers' Schools ; and, in the endowing and maintaining of such an institution, the Commercial Travellers must raise themselves both in their own esteem and in the public regard. In this place any individual here can establish an individual right and title by the humble contribution of one guinea—and it could be handsomely maintained if every commercial traveller in the world would give it one half-crown on a given day every year. Gentlemen, I wish I could say of my order, or of others of greater pretensions, that its members were united in following such an example. I can say that there is no other order of men in this kingdom, who, in their selection of men in whom to repose educational trust, do greater honour to themselves or to the cause of education than the board of management of this institution. I hope, then, sincerely, that the time is not far distant when the Commercial Traveller who does not belong to this institution will be a rare and isolated case. I do hope this with some confidence, because I cannot believe that it is possible that many Commercial Travellers can look upon their own dear children and not feel that they would be better and lighter hearted for being sharers in this Institution. Gentlemen, we should remember to-night that we are all Travellers, and that every round we take converges nearer and nearer to our home ; that all our little journeyings bring us together to one certain end ; and that the good that we do, and the virtues that we show, and particularly the children that we rear, survive us through the long and unknown perspective of time. When those children who now contemplate our proceedings pass around us presently, it can scarcely be but that some of this company will recognise in some little face the likeness of some friend or companion. Any one of us may read the affecting words of tenderness which were spoken by him who was once a child, and who loved little children. Let those words, not mine, speak eloquently for those Schools. (Applause.) And now, gentlemen, having put the case before you on its own plain merits, I am about to propose to you to drink, " Prosperity to This Establishment."

# Bunk

BY A. TRUBE BELLEUGH.

IT has come ! I thought it would in time. And now it has come. DICKENS IS DEBUNKED. Mr. Colm Brogan* has spoken ! " Poor Charles Dickens." This expression is not my own ; it is in the leading article of *The Listener* for August 26th, 1948, and as that leading article is headed " Debunking," it must be true.

The transient fashion set by Lytton Strachey in 1918 of writing biography with a new twist, and imitated for a short period by writers " who had not half the wit or style of Lytton Strachey " as the Editor of *The Listener* says, had passed. The cult of debunking had died of its own inanition, and I and lovers of good literature hoped and thought that debunking our great ones had come to its allotted end. Now it has once more reared its detestable head. Dickens was a great Victorian, and is " fair game."

Only a year or two ago, in this present time of pretended enlightenment, to be dubbed " Victorian " was a term of almost abuse, but recently judgement has seemed to return to something like sanity, and Victorianism is being reinstated as nearly worthy of commendation and we are beginning to be allowed to live once more on pleasant memories of those relatively halcyon days—at least they seem so when compared with present conditions.

Now this state of affairs is rudely broken by the urgent necessity to debunk Dickens, and all because he wrote *Oliver Twist*. Well, not quite ; it is because the book was not written for the screen. Here are the opening words of the broadcast : " The man who cut up *Oliver Twist* for the screen must have been rather irritated with Dickens before he was done." That's it ; and the sub-heading of the printed version of the debunking broadcast reads : " Dickens's shortcomings as a novelist." Surely it should have been " Dickens's shortcomings as a scenario writer " in order to shew his complete ignorance of the art or faculty of writing for the picture-theatre. Or, better still, " The shortcomings of a Producer " who was unable to present *Oliver Twist* unless it was " cut up." When you come to think of it, was it necessary for Oliver to be present on the roof before Bill Sikes could hang himself ? I am told that modern script-convention demands that the principal actor should appear at the climax. What a pity Dickens did not know that. As it is, it is nothing like Dickens ! I don't wonder that the man who " cut up " the story was irritated. I am reminded of the little cartoon in *Punch* shewing two women leaving a cinema. Said one : " Shall you read the book, dear ? " " Oh no " was the reply, " not now I've seen the picture."

At any cost, Dickens must be debunked. Grounds must be found for debunking this very inferior writer who couldn't tell a story fit for the films. Three have been put forward. To begin with, he is accused of not knowing whether Bumble was " an old presbyter or a new priest." Well, even if he didn't, which is far from certain, perhaps Cruikshank, who was twenty years older than Dickens, and who illustrated the book, did ; and Cruikshank was so proud of his connexion with the work that many years afterwards he affirmed that he was the originator of the novel and that Dickens only wrote what Cruikshank told him to, after he had drawn the pictures, Bumble and all. And what a mess they seem to have made of it.

*Oliver Twist* was written in 1837, and it seems to me that Dickens

* In a B.B.C. broadcast in August, 1948, and printed in *The Listener* for August, 26th.

might possibly remember an Act of Parliament passed only three years before, while he was still a reporter in the House of Commons. Besides which we have Dickens's own statement in a letter dated January 21st, 1864, that " the descriptions in *Oliver Twist* are founded on close observation and reflection." I also recall that before *Oliver Twist* was thought of Dickens had been writing of Beadles and the Poor Law and cognate matters, and editors of magazines had been accepting his *Sketches by Boz* as authentic pictures of contemporary conditions worthy of publication. (Of course, it is possible that the editors were sublimely ignorant and took Dickens—then unknown and writing under a pseudonym—on trust.)

It seems to me that the debunkers have not much of a case, but I suppose it is sufficiently damning to justify the debunking of Dickens. So Dickens must be debunked.

What's the next thing ? Here it is : Dickens " was not a social reformer at all, but only a social protester." Well, well ! The short answer to that is that he never said he was ; the nearest he ever got to such a claim was the remark in his letter to Forster about the object of *The Chimes* : " I like more and more my notion of making, in this little book, a great blow for the poor. Something powerful, I think I can do, but I want to be tender, too, and cheerful." (There is the real Dickens ; the man with a great heart.) It was other people, after his death, who called him a social reformer. The question is however worth a little consideration. Can a protester, or, if you like the word better, an exposer, of social inequalities and evils, be a reformer ? Must a reformer necessarily be one who shouts and tub-thumps all over the country with propaganda for a pet and set scehme ? Cannot one who arouses in the people a consciousness of what is being done for them to improve their conditions be styled a reformer ? I think he can, and if you agree with that view, then Dickens *was* a Social Reformer of very powerful influence. Here is Forster in evidence : " Every movement for practical social reforms, to obtain more sanitary legislation, to get the best compulsory education practicable for the poor, and to better the condition of the labouring people, he assisted earnestly to his last hour ; and the readiness with which he took the chair at meetings having such objects in view, the help he gave to important societies working in beneficent ways for themselves or the community, and the power and attractiveness of his oratory, made him one of the forces of his time."

When the *Daily News* was founded in 1846, the first really liberal daily newspaper to be attempted in London, Dickens as Editor wrote in his first leading article that its policy would be guided by " principles of progress and improvement, of education, civil and religious liberty, and equal legislation ; principles such as its conductors believe the advancing spirit of the times require, the condition of the country demands, and justice, reason, and experience legitimately sanction. Very much has to be done towards the bodily comfort, mental elevation, and general contentment of the English people." Still, with all this, Dickens is said to be " not a social reformer but only a social protester." Dickens must be debunked.

The next accusation is that " Dickens didn't like women much. He never tired of guying their vapours and their sulks, their shrewishness and snobberies, their vanity and jealousy and all the armoury of hen-pecking." But, surely, the slightest real acquaintance with Dickens's writings would reveal something more than this. *All* his women were not Mrs. Gargerys, or Mrs. MacStingers, or Mrs. Vardens, or Mrs. Chicks, or Mrs. Gamps, or Mrs. Wititterlys. I seem to remember a few, nay, quite a number, who do not qualify for inclusion in that category, such as Mrs. Boffin, Mrs. Lupin, Ruth Pinch, Bella Wilfer,

Mrs. Lirriper, and Betsey Trotwood, all of whom possessed the sweetest dispositions. And I have named only a few of Dickens's extensive gallery of portraits.

I may be told that there are also some rather colourless women although they are not included in the indictment; anyway, they have not the qualities so energetically condemned. But, like all Dickens's characters, even these come to life because they are true to life as it was lived then. Even Dickens's ineffective women, like Dora Copperfield or Esther Summerson, are alive; they are not fictions of the imagination; their lives are those lived by the people Dickens knew; they lived the lives of our great-grand-parents, and they did not certainly possess the attributes with which Dickens's women are credited in the indictment. It is evidently forgotten that in accordance with English custom of the period the women of the family were not allowed to go out and earn their living or to be particularly purposeful; they stayed at home and occupied their time with plain and fancy needlework, tambour-work, netting and crochet, a little music and drawing and other "lady-like accomplishments." Many of them were good linguists. The object of their training was to fit them for marriage. This may not appeal to the modern who wants an excuse for debunking Dickens, but it is true, nevertheless, and we must accept the circumstances and admit that Dickens's characters were living. Can it be truthfully asserted that "Dickens didn't like women much?" No matter; he must be debunked.

But there is a pendant to this. "With Fallen Women he was hesitant and ambiguous." Very well, then; he erred as nations and governments have erred ever since Roman times, and earlier; read Lecky and see; the subject has always been, and is still being. dealt with ambiguously. But does Dickens deserve the accusation? He may not have been as downright and outspoken as Doctor Johnson—I forbear giving the exact words—but hesitant and ambiguous he certainly was not; he never truckled with evil in any shape. Unless indeed a hatred of the sin, coupled with a deep sympathy and tenderness for the sinner be signs of hesitancy and ambiguity. Remember his many years of close association with the Baroness Burdett-Coutts in the work of the Homes at Shepherd's Bush. She did nothing without consulting Dickens first, and his letters to her are full of constructive suggestions exhibiting neither hesitancy or ambiguity. And in his books I find no sign of hesitancy or ambiguity in his treatment of Nancy, any more than I do in the cases of Little Em'ly, or Lady Dedlock, or Alice Marwood (Brown).

Is that all? Yes, all for the present, till the debunkers can think of something else; let us say, something new. But what has been said is evidently sufficient for the purpose of debunking Dickens. And I must say it seems a pretty poor case. Why not debunk Walter Scott because he sometimes, avowedly, played tricks with the dates in his historical romances?

But wait. Dickens "did melodrama superbly well, as he did so many other things superbly well"—praise from Sir Hubert?—"but he had the bad habit of doing them all at the same time, *which is unfortunate for his dramatisers.*" Ah! there it is again: Dramatisers. In Dickens's time they had another word for it. How Dickens suffered in his lifetime from the piracies of Moncrieff, Stirling and others. Some of them, in their "dramatisations," completed the plots before Dickens had finished the story. It may be said nowadays that Dickens is dead and that it does not matter; but Dickens is not so dead as all that, and it does matter a great deal.

Are there no modern scenario writers capable of creating as bloodthirsty and exciting a melodrama as *Oliver Twist*? Yes, of course,

but to take the produce of another's brains, especially when it has not to be paid for, instead of using one's own, is so much easier. Besides, in spite of the fact that he is to be debunked, Dickens's name is a certain draw, even to people who have never read a single word of his books. So his stories are " cut-up " to suit the supposed requirements of the film-going public.

If irritation is aroused in the breast of the adapter in the process of the " cutting up " he says: " Naughty, naughty Dickens ! you don't know anything about writing for the movies ; you have given me immense trouble making ever so many alterations ; I shall have to re-write most of it before it's presentable. *Naughty* Dickens ! Come and be debunked ! " Like the child who, on stumbling, says : " Naughty stone to hurt poor baby's foot."

The fact is that you can't debunk Dickens. His place in English life, history and literature is much too firmly established to make it possible. You may just as well try to debunk, let us say, St. Paul's Cathedral or St. Peter's at Rome. You may say that you don't like them ; well, that's honest and forthright, but you can't blame either of them for not pleasing you. They are the admiration of the rest of the world, and you will be the " odd " man out. Certain details in them may not meet with your entire approval, and very probably you may find people to agree with you. But you can't alter them without ruining the unity of their design and the grandeur of their conception ; they are works of genius. Similarly, you may say you don't like Dickens ; well, that's honest and forthright, but you can't blame Dickens for not pleasing you. His books are the admiration of the rest of the world, and you will be the " odd " man out. Certain details in them may not meet with your entire approval, and very probably you may find people to agree with you. But you can't alter them without ruining their design and the grandeur of their conception ; they are works of genius.

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# " And All That's Nice "

By RUTH WHITTAKER

THE magic touch of a small child's hand in guiding straying footsteps has been a constant ingredient in magazine and melodrama ; we all know the angelic little white-clad figure who toddles up to the villain and innocently asks, " Is oo my daddy ? " and, with no other aid than a white nightgown and a lisp, reforms burglar, miser or erring husband. Dickens, in spite of his sentiment, handles this theme discreetly. But he does show us, again and again, what an awakening effect a child can have on one who, having suffered some wrong or loss, has withdrawn from human contact. The Christmas Stories, to which we naturally turn at this time, show many examples : Sophie, the Golden Lucy, the dream child of the Poor Relation, the pathetic little Bebelle, Polly. Polly has been sent by her mother expressly to waylay the embittered Barbox Brothers and melt his heart with her, " Oh if you please, I am lost," but her approach is severely practical.

" We are going to have dinner, I suppose ? " she asks, and then, " Of course you are going to amuse me ? " For such a misanthrope he really does very well ; his description of the wonderful ponies, speckled all over, which jump through hoops and eat pies in pinafores,

does great credit to Polly's teaching, but his subsequent extravagance makes one rather wonder whether a reformed man is worth a spoilt child, which is what Polly will quickly become in his care.

And it is invariably a girl child who is chosen for the reformation. I don't know why, unless it is assumed that since grown women have a penchant for saving erring men they can't begin too early. Not that all these relationships are based on reform; five-year-old Bella Wilfer, for instance, seems to have won her benefactor's admiration solely on a display of temper. Of course, a true modern would probably put it all down to a perverted mother complex, but I refuse utterly to believe that. Rather must it be that in little boys the world-weary man sees something he would rather not see, a reminder of his own vanished hopes, but with a little girl he can forget all that; in his heart he feels he is still young and entitled to share youth with youth. He is flattered, too, to think he still has power to charm the feminine heart . . . "say I'm growing old, but add, Jenny kiss'd me."

Even outside their books, authors appear to be particularly susceptible to little-girl friendships, if we are to believe all the stories of Scott, Hood, W. H. Hudson and many others. Lewis Carroll's life seems to have been packed with little girls, and in summertime he would wander on the seashore with bundles of safety pins with which he gravely offered to pin up the frocks of little paddlers. There must be something quite unusually nice about little girls. And authors. It was not only because she was a princess that our Princess Margaret, when the late J. M. Barrie saw her little house and asked if it was all hers, made the perfect reply, "Yours and mine." And descending the social scale with rapidity, I remember halcyon days when Thomas Burke would whisk me off to his home, specially decorated with yellow Easter chicks and birds' nests, for me.

Dickens, I suspect, saw little girls only as budding women. But Kate Douglas Wiggin has described a very happy encounter with him in America. Knowing he was on the train, she found his compartment and while he was looking out of the window slid into his seat; the rest of the journey was devoted to a discussion and criticism of his books. Her admission that she skipped the dull parts—"not the short dull parts but the long ones"—was probably compensated for by the discovery that both of them liked *David Copperfield* the best, and that both cried at the same parts. The interview must surely have warmed his heart. He would have been more moved, and perhaps surprised, to know of those many other American little girls who were devouring his books, who, a few years hence, would be producing stories of their own; stories which, though worlds removed from his great genius, were yet, in a quiet unimitative way, "all over Dickens," as Shaw would say. That tear-sodden pioneer, *The Wide Wide World*, has a chapter headed "Something Turns Up," and its blighted heroine has at least one thing in common with Esther Summerson. Mrs. Wiggs "of the Cabbage Patch" boldly emulates Mrs. Bagnet and christens her children after the continents. The heroine of *What Katy Did*, immediately she arrives in England, chooses for her first meal, muffins, "because they sound so good in Dickens." Naturally they prove disappointing; they remind her of buttered ironing blanket and she wonders why Dickens made such a fuss about them. Louisa Alcott is nearly as full of sly references to Dickens as is, in our own day, our beloved Angela Thirkell; and the tenth chapter of *Little Women*, describing the fifty-second anniversary of the Pickwick Club, makes the Dickens Fellowship seem absurdly young. It was published about a year before Dickens died. I hope he read it. It contains, I believe, the only published example of Mr. Snodgrass's poetry.

# FROM RECENT BOOKS

By LOUIS B. FREWER, M.A.
(Bodleian Library)

## THE ENGLISH NOVEL, 1760-1830

"Pages over which an enthusiast had rejoiced or suffered were returned to the bookseller in a particularly bad state. Viewing in retrospect an old library of the Minerva Press, Charles Dickens says, in 'Our English Watering Place,' 'The leaves of the romances, reduced to a condition very like curl-paper, are thickly studded with notes in pencil. . . .' The nature of these impulsively phrased marginalia affords this novelist an amusing picture of the habits of a reading public nearly a century earlier than his own. 'Some of these commentators,' he adds, 'like commentators in a more extensive way, quarrel with one another. A young gentleman who sarcastically writes "O ! ! ! " after every sentimental passage, is pursued through his literary career by another, who writes "Insulting Beast ! " '

"'The Old Printer and the Modern Press' [by] Charles Knight . . . is dedicated to his contemporary, Charles Dickens, 'one of the most earnest labourers in that popular literature which elevates a people.' At Birmingham, on December 30th, 1853, Dickens gave one of the earliest of his famous public readings before two thousand interested working men, having previously stipulated that the price of the seats be kept within their means. By so doing he might be thought of as epitomising the larger force which the novel was wielding in the interests of the same lower classes which had contributed to that type of writing its greatest public and popularity. In spite of the fact that the bad reputation of the novel as a literary form was still sufficiently strong to cause Dickens to be looked down upon by reviewers such as those for the 'Athenaeum,' in his work and in the social novel of his age those who had long insisted upon didactic purpose began to feel that they had something of value which they could assign to this species of composition. That the formula was not so simple as they believed, or, indeed, that the novel had actually been a great social force since the publication of 'Pamela,' did not concern critics of this type. Nor did it any longer matter. A more powerful critic, the new reading public, had passed its verdict. The miners who heard Dickens at Birmingham were a quite different group from the silken circle who had listened to Richardson read 'Clarissa'; they represented a change which had made its influence felt upon the novel form itself, as well as upon the nation."—"Early Opposition to the English Novel: the popular reaction from 1760 to 1830," by J. T. Taylor. (New York, King's Crown Press.)

## PSYCHOLOGY INVADES LITERATURE

### "Importance of Characters in Victorian Novels

"The relevant characteristics of the modern novel may most suitably be described in relation to those of the Victorian novel with which they are contrasted. The great triumph of the Victorian novelists lay in their ability to create characters, and it is the absence of memorable and outstanding characters which constitutes the chief difference between the Victorian novel and the novel.

"The Victorian novels, it is obvious, stand or fall by their characters, and on the whole they triumphantly stand. Thackeray and Dickens, George Eliot and the Brontës, Trollope and Mrs. Gaskell, to take a few names at random, all possessed the gift of creating characters. Their books teem with real live people, as round and rich and vital as their flesh and blood prototypes, more so in fact than many of them, and Weller and Micawber, Becky Sharp and Mrs. Poyser, Heathcliff and Paul Emmanuel and Mrs. Proudie are among the most memorable achievements of fiction in any age or country.

"By their characters the Victorian novelists set great store. They rarely introduce them without a preliminary flourish of descriptive matter, and even comparatively unimportant personages usually get a page or two to themselves, describing their lineage, appearance, personal characteristics, likes, dislikes, attitude to religion, to morals, to their friends and neighbours, and to life generally, before they are allowed to take the stage and we to

make their acquaintance. Take, for example, the introduction of Mrs. Corney, widow and matron of the workhouse, in *Oliver Twist*. Mrs. Corney is not an important character although a very amusing one, and her relations with Mr. Bumble are a side issue in the book, having little relevance to the main theme; yet in my edition of *Oliver Twist* two pages are devoted to a preliminary description of herself, her room at the workhouse, her meditation on her late and hopes of a future husband, her preparations for tea. . . . Or take Mr. Podsnap in *Our Mutual Friend*. Mr. Podsnap is unessential to the story; he plays no part in the unfolding of the complicated plot; he is introduced only in order that Dickens may speak his mind on the subject of English hypocrisy, complacency and unimaginative insularity; and to speak his mind he does to the tune of three pages devoted to the introduction of Mr. Podsnap before Mr. Podsnap is allowed to speak for himself."—" Guide to Modern Thought," by C. E. M. Joad. (Faber.)

## COPYRIGHT

" After this editorial on Mrs. Trollope, the ' Register ' printed little, if anything, for ten years on English books about America, but the coming of Charles Dickens in 1842 broke this long silence. The primary purpose of his visit was to urge the passage of an international copyright law and his open propagandizing in favor of the measure and his none-too-tactful references to American editors aroused a storm of opposition which destroyed any chance the measure ever had of enactment.

" The ' Register ' printed without comment nearly three columns from the ' National Intelligencer,' including a letter from Dickens, an address to the American public from twelve leading English authors among whom were Alfred Tennyson, Leigh Hunt, Henry Hallam, Sydney Smith, and Thomas Hood, a letter from these same writers to Dickens, and a letter from Thomas Carlyle to Dickens, comparing copyright violation to stealing. Several months later an outspoken circular by Dickens in the London ' Chronicle,' giving a résumé of his efforts in behalf of the legislation was printed. In this report Dickens wrote that James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, William H. Prescott, and many others, had signed a petition and that Henry Clay had presented it to Congress. He warned English authors against American newspaper editors, many of whom, he charged, had an interest ' in the existing system of piracy and plunder.' Describing them as ' men of very low attainments and of more than indifferent reputation,' he suggested that British authors hold correspondence only with respectable American publishing houses. This letter not unnaturally brought a counter-attack from the American press. The ' Register ' asserted that had the European advocates of the copyright measure left the American people to decide for themselves, it might have passed, but that it met its death blow in Dickens' visit. The same editorial commented on the author's *American Notes*, which was reprinted in numerous pirated editions within a few hours after its arrival on the *Great Western*. Thousands of copies were being sold on New York streets at twelve and one-half cents each, nineteen hours after the ship docked. Philadelphians snapped up 1,500 copies as quickly as they could be handed to purchasers, and the same was true of other cities. The ' Register's ' comment was temperate, compared with many. ' The work will sadly lower the estimate in which the author was held—both as a writer and a man, although there are many well-written and some wholesome paragraphs in it. The chapter upon slavery in America is decidedly the most outrageous libel upon our country which we have met with in any of the British authors.' "—" Niles' Weekly Register," by N. N. Luxon. (Louisiana State Univ. Press.)

## WOOLWICH

" The thing which the Victorians of a century ago feared most was having to go to the workhouse. The thing they and the reformers—Charles Dickens in the van with *Bleak House*—most condemned was the huddling of families into inadequate space, two or more to a room, and the herding of human beings into similar congested spaces, as Poor Jo slept in Tom All-Alone's.

" Whatever the conglomeration of causes might include, there was no question that the social habits of the mass of the poorer people had changed markedly for the better. Such figures as Poor Jo and Stephen Blackpool's dipsomaniac of a wife, and of the perpetually drunken wandering labourers

who moved through *Bleak House*, *Hard Times* and other Victorian novels were common enough in Dickens's own day.

"Twenty years before the Woolwich Equitable Building Society was established Mr. Samuel Pickwick went to Strood, Rochester, Brompton and Chatham. These towns had in common with Woolwich their location in Kent . . . and their dependence in part upon a dockyard and the soldiery. What Mr. Pickwick saw there he might have seen, *mutatis mutandis*, had he rested in Woolwich. . .

"To less humorous observers than the young Mr. Dickens, writing without satire, such a dockyard town as any of the four visited by the Pickwick Club was not an attractive architectural spectacle. . . . Charles Dickens the younger, in his 'Dictionary of London, of 1879,' notes, a little glumly: 'There is no good hotel accommodation in Woolwich, but on the other side of the river dinners are well served at the North Woolwich Gardens Hotel.' "—"The First Hundred Years of the Woolwich Equitable Building Society," by Collin Brooks. (London, privately printed.)

"Unlike most Englishmen I regarded Reade as a far greater writer than Dickens, and indeed have no hesitation in putting 'The Cloister and the Hearth' side by side with 'Vanity Fair' in my admiration, and perhaps an little higher in my love."—"Frank Harris, his life and adventures, an autobiography." (Richards Press.)

# Sonnet

BY THE LATE FRANCIS ADAM HILLIARD
a founder of the Rowfant Club, Cleveland, U.S.A.

I called upon the Gods to show to me
  The image of the maid they loved the best
  In all the world of Fiction. My request
Was scarcely uttered ere the Mighty Three
Bowed each to each—as when the Gods agree—
  And one, the eldest, chose from all the rest
  A crystal ball to which his lips he pressed—
Then held it up that I might plainly see.

And lo! within a room, gaunt, timbered, bare,
  Before a brazier fire I saw a maid,
  Hands clasping knees, her fancies all a-play.
And as she read "the hollow by the flare,"
  I saw her soul, so white I was afraid—
  'Twas Lizzie, waiting for the Bird of Prey.

# DICKENSIANA

"The London of Charles Dickens." Leslie C. Staples. Illus. by Wm. A. Clark.
*Holly Leaves*, the Christmas Number of *Sport and Country*.
"A Dickens Sensation" (The MS of *The Life of Our Lord*). Cecil Hunt.
*Everybody's Weekly*, October 23rd.

Book Reviews on p. 25.

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CONGRATULATIONS and good wishes to the following newly-appointed Secretaries:

Miss N. Richards, of Wolverhampton, and Mrs. S. Milleson, of Everett.

The thanks of the entire Fellowship are tendered to the retiring officers:

Miss J. Brown, of Wolverhampton, and Miss E. M. Carroll, of Everett.

# THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

*Branch Reports of not more than 200 words are invited for inclusion on this page. Press cuttings are not acceptable*

## BROMLEY

THE new season opened on October 9th with a slightly increased membership for the Annual General Meeting, followed by a paper from Mr. T. S. Lascelles on " Dickens's Love of the Country " and his accurate and poetical descriptions of country scenery. During the past year we have had Readings from the *Christmas Books* and from *Barnaby Rudge*; Mr. Lascelles read a paper on " The Charm of Dickens's letters "; Mr. S. Davis gave " A Ramble with a Rogue (Riderhood) "; Mrs. Jane Bacon told of the difficulties of " Dramatising Dickens "; Mr. John Greaves presented some of his excellent Impersonations from *Great Expectations*; and a series of Whist Drives was held. In April we had our Annual Dinner, and in the summer we have made our annual Pilgrimage to Rochester, and spent a profitable afternoon at the Dickens House. We are mourning the loss of Mr. Archibald C. Norman, J.P., who has died, aged 85; he was one of a notable family in the history of Bromley, and had always shewn a keen interest in the welfare of the Branch, and before the war presided for many years at our Annual Dinner.

T. W. H.

## EASTBOURNE

AN Inaugural Meeting was held on October 10th, 1947, at which a warm welcome was extended to the representatives from Headquarters, including Capt. Schuckburgh, great-grandson of Charles Dickens. Cameos from Dickens were presented in December. On February 7th a successful Birthday Dinner was held at the Angles Hotel. The President, Mr. C. H. Taylor, presided. Mr. John Greaves, of London, entertained with some very brilliant impersonations of Dickens characters. Miss Ada Flatman read a description of David Copperfield's first dinner party. In March a programme was arranged by Mrs. Greaves on " Some Dickens Twins," and a number of very enjoyable readings were given. In April Mr. James Dear gave a lecture, " Songs in Dickens." In May Miss Elsie Reeds' Orchestral and Vocal Concert was a great success. In June, Mr. A. M. P. Dawson gave an enlightening paper on " Dickens and the Law." A Reading by Miss Ada Flatman, " Horatio Sparkins." A paper by Miss Christine Mosley, " Boys in Dickens." Mrs. E. N. Goode was " at home " on July 6th and 7th and members warmly appreciated the hospitality extended to them at her delightful house at Little Common. In July a motor coach trip to Rochester proved very popular. The past year has been a very difficult one and the sincere thanks of the Council is extended to all who have helped to make the session so attractive and successful. The present membership is 70.

A. M. W.

## GUILDFORD

A BRANCH of the Dickens Fellowship has now been formed at Guildford, Surrey. The inaugural meeting was held at The Royal Grammar School on October 5th and was addressed by Mr. R. C. D. Shuckburgh, great-grandson of Mr. Dickens, who outlined the philanthropic, educational and entertainment pursuits of the Fellowship and spoke of the big effort which was being made to raise £10,000 for the purpose of endowing the Dickens House. Mr. John Greaves, Hon. Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship, read and recited passages from Dickens's works which established a link with Guildford. When it was decided that a branch should be formed, the following officers were elected: Mr. A. J. B. Green (President), Miss D. M. Liggett (Chairman), Mr. A. Pheeby (Secretary), Mr. H. Sutcliffe (Treasurer), and a Committee comprising Messrs. K. Payne, E. P. Cotton, C. Maisey, Mrs. R. Briggs and Miss M. Chard. It was arranged that for the present Branch Meetings should be held on the first Thursday of the month at the Guildford Reference Library.

L. W. B.

## NOTTINGHAM

TWO performances of a new version of *A Tale of Two Cities* were given by the Nottingham Branch on May 29th and 30th. Being late in the session the attendances were not as large as had been hoped, but the audiences on both occasions were both appreciative and enthusiastic. The cast contained 25 characters, who spoke 18 short scenes, which were in their turn linked

together by a narrator, and which gave a reasonably satisfactory précis of the Tale. The play was in the main produced by Mr. Pay, seconded by Miss Mary Glover, while Mr. B. Bastow, as scenic artist and stage manager, was never at a loss in surmounting the many difficulties of such a production. The players who took the principal parts were for the most part experienced amateurs and gave an excellent rendering of them, and in their turn were well supported by others in a minor capacity. The play was adapted by the President. Enthusiasm and goodwill prevailed all through the numerous rehearsals. Altogether a thoroughly enjoyable production to all who helped in any capacity. Costumes were supplied by the Dickens Fellowship Costume Department in London and here tribute should be paid to Miss Minards at Dickens House who lent invaluable assistance. The financial result was £17 10s. for the Dickens House Endowment Fund (Walter Dexter Memorial).

J. C. S.

### ST. PANCRAS

The new session opened most successfully on October 2nd when Mr. J. Greaves, the President for the year (Hon. Secretary of Headquarters) gave an address on "The Character-artist and Dickens," with many illustrative recitals, which was enthusiastically received. The Branch has always been most fortunate in its Presidents and Mr. Greaves popularly voiced the feeling of the meeting when he thanked Mrs. Bacon, the retiring President, for her excellent work during the past year. He also paid tribute to the Committee. An attractive programme has been arranged for the season. The financial situation is gratifying, and the support of charities and the roll of membership have both been well sustained. A Birthday Dinner is being arranged for February 16th.

A. N.

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## OBITUARY

### A. H. Cleaver

It is with the greatest regret that we record the death at his home in Cheshire, of Mr. A. H. Cleaver, who had long been in failing health.

Mr. Cleaver was comparatively unknown in the Dickens world until the publication of the monumental *Bibliography of the Periodical Works of Charles Dickens*, published by Chapman & Hall in 1933, of which he was co-author with Thomas Hatton. Thereafter he came into prominence for his readiness to help serious students. He was able to give them valuable assistance by affording them the benefit of the research work of his father-in-law, John F. Dexter, whose collection had been bequeathed to his daughter, Mrs. Cleaver.

Like so many collectors in the early part of the century, Mr. Dexter was content to keep his Part issues and ephemera in brown-paper parcels. Mr. Cleaver remedied this state of affairs by enclosing them in boxes and folders worthy of their merit, inlaying the letters and loose illustrations and finally compiling a valuable index to the whole collection.

Until his death in 1927, John F. Dexter was the acknowledged authority on Dickens bibliography and the source of inspiration and encouragement to Dickens collectors and students. He was always ready to discuss and advise upon such matters although only an intimate circle had the *entrée* to his library.

This is not the occasion to appraise the famous collection but as an example to collectors it may be pointed out that Mr. Dexter was not satisfied until he had secured the best copy obtainable and he strongly condemned "made-up" copies. Its outstanding features are the superb condition of the items and the absence of "doctored" books. All Dickens collectors will be gratified to know that the family traditions are to be maintained by the present owner, his grand-daughter. It may be added that John F. Dexter was not related to Walter Dexter.

### M. H. Spielmann

In our last number we recorded the attainment by Mr. Marion Harry Spielmann of his ninetieth birthday on May 22nd. Now, alas, we have with deep sorrow to record his death on October 2nd. His long life had been devoted to Art and Literature. He had been Editor of the magazine of Art for seventeen years, and of the Art Section of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, contributed to Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters*, and to the *Dictionary of*

*National Biography.* His orderly and well-informed mind had caused him to be consulted in the organisation and establishment of Art Galleries and Exhibitions in England and abroad, and many of the improvements during the years from about 1880 to 1920 were due to his influence. His literary accomplishments included an intimate knowledge of Shakespeare, Chaucer and Ruskin and were recognised by his election as a Vice-President of the Royal Society of Literature. Spielmann was a critic of ripe and temperate but well-informed judgement and his output included excellent biographies of painters, draughtsmen and sculptors; his *Unidentified Contributions of Thackeray to Punch* (1899) and *The History of Punch* (1925) shewed his graphic style and he gave ungrudgingly of his knowledge when Walter Dexter was compiling the "Dickensian Peeps into Punch" that appeared in *The Dickensian* from 1835 to 1838. This distinguished scholar had a genuine love of Dickens and his name appears in the first printed list of our Vice-Presidents. In the midst of his varied and widespread interests he always kept in touch with our activities, contributed to *The Dickensian*, and lectured to the London Branch in the early days. We have at the Dickens House Frith's replica of his portrait of the novelist painted in 1859; this at one time belonged to Mrs. Spielmann, herself a gifted writer (she died in 1938) who was a member of the Dickens Fellowship and a constant reader and occasional contributor to *The Dickensian.* A delightful companion, modest of his own attainments, encouraging to those less learned than himself, persuasive in conversation, affectionate in disposition and quite incapable of saying an unkind thing or of giving pain, Spielmann leaves by his passing a sense of real loss to English culture and a vacancy in the hearts of those with whom he held familiar intercourse.

T. W. H.

### Mrs. A. Buchanan

The Portsmouth Branch has suffered a severe blow by the death of its valued Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. A. Buchanan, as a result of a street accident. In spite of grievous troubles (her husband died as a result of being entrapped in their home during an air-raid, which entailed her own detention in hospital for months, and the subsequent loss of her son on active service) she preserved a cheerful spirit and was an indefatigable worker for the branch. D. S.

### T. Cann Hughes

The death of Mr. T. Cann Hughes, M.A., F.S.A., has brought to an end a long career of usefulness and scholarship. After taking his degree at Cambridge, Cann Hughes became Town Clerk of Lancaster for nearly thirty years. He took a leading part in many antiquarian and literary societies and in County History. He produced some books after original research and retained until quite recently an eager and boyish enthusiasm for all literary and archæological enquiries. In 1911 he founded the Lancaster Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, served as its first Secretary and later as President, and sat for a few years on the Headquarters Council. T. W. H.

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## THE DICKENS HOUSE ENDOWMENT FUND
### (WALTER DEXTER MEMORIAL)

*Seventeen Pounds Ten Shillings.*—Nottingham Branch.
*Ten Guineas.*—M. le Comte de Suzannet.
*Four Pounds Eight Shillings and Sixpence.*—Mr. J. Cooper Sands—sale of Plays.
*Two Pounds Six Shillings.*—Gloucester Branch—Mr. Greaves Lecture.
*Two Guineas.*—Mr. E. J. Chadfield.
*Two Pounds.*—Mrs. Giles (Nottingham Branch).
*One Pound Five Shillings.*—Anon.
*One Pound Four Shillings and One Penny.*—Mr. Ulysses Walsh.
*One Guinea.*—Mr. Greaves (West Wickham Arts Circle), Mr. C. H. Redman, Mr. James Shepherd, Mr. G. F. Young (Kodak Society Ramble).
*One Pound.*—Mrs. Hudson (Rugby Branch).
*Ten Shillings and Sixpence.*—Mr. Greaves *via* Miss Greatwood, Miss May S. Jeffery.
*Ten Shillings.*—Mr. Yvon Hawkes, Mr. W. E. Jones (Pittsburgh).
*Five Shillings.*—Miss M. Elsie Jones.

Total to date £3,768 4s. 2d.

# The Dickens Fellowship

## LONDON MEETINGS.

Meetings not previously announced, indicated thus *

DECEMBER:

Fri. 10—Dramatic Performance at 7-30 p.m. "THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP." Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, in aid of the Dickens House Endowment Fund (Walter Dexter Memorial). Seats, numbered and reserved, 10/-, 7/6 and 5/-.

Tues. 14—"DICKENS AND CHRISTMAS." Items contributed by Mr. J. Greaves, Mr. Percy Merriman and Mr. R. S. Shuckburgh, C.B.E.

JANUARY.

Tues. 18—"IN DEFENCE OF LITTLE NELL." Lecture by Miss Dilys Powell.

*Wed. 26—WHIST DRIVE. 6-30 for 7 p.m. Bonnington Hotel, Southampton Row, W.C.1. Tickets 3/6.

FEBRUARY.

Mon. 7—DICKENS BIRTHDAY DINNER. 7 for 7-30 p.m. Connaught Rooms, Gt. Queen Street, W.C.1. The President in the Chair. Guests of the evening: Mr. Felix Aylmer and Mr. Francis L. Sullivan. Tickets 17/6.

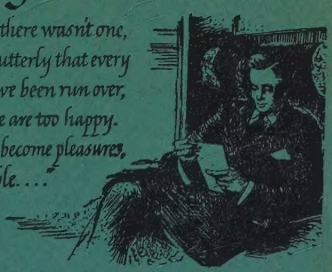
Thurs. 10—"GOLDEN THREADS OF DICKENS." Lecture-recital by the Rev. Geo. A. Parkinson. Silver Collection in aid of the Foundling Hospital.

*Sun. 13—DICKENS COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE. Southwark Cathedral. 6-30 p.m. Preacher: The Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Southwark.

All meetings, unless otherwise stated, will be held at the Swedenborg Hall, 20-22 Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1, at 7 p.m., doors open at 6-30 p.m.


# Letter to my love...

*"...I expected a letter from you this morning, but there wasn't one, so I re-read the last two. Darling, I love you so utterly that every time the post is late I am convinced that you have been run over, and no one dares to tell me! Sometimes I think we are too happy. Now that I know you love me, all the duties of life become pleasures, and without your love no pleasure is imaginable...."*



EVERY LETTER you write is your ambassador. To your sweetheart or your mother, to your dearest friend, write simply, from the heart. And just as carefully as you select your words, so you select your stationery.

There is no better notepaper, and none better-looking, than Basildon Bond. It makes writing, *and reading*, a pleasure. It does you credit! Its quality has remained extremely high, its price remarkably low. Ask for Basildon Bond by name.

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